

NEW MASSES

DECEMBER 1930

15 CENTS



I. KLEIN

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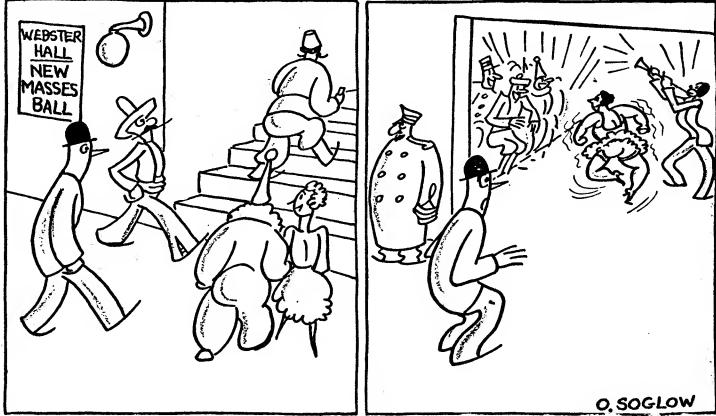


I. KLEIN



The Hall Burned Down After The Last New Masses Ball

So they built a new one of asbestos. Because of the overflow crowd at the last annual ball, this year, both the main hall and the annex will be thrown open at Webster Hall. Two orchestras, the best in Harlem—and dancing until 3.00 A. M. New decorations, novel colored lighting, and new cartoon paintings by 20 NEW MASSES artists. Special performance, dancing and singing.



O. SOGLOW
Drawn by Otto Soglow

TICKETS: Admission \$1.50 in advance and \$2.50 at the door. Tickets can be secured at the New Masses office, 112 East 19th St., or by mail. Phone reservations accepted at advance price of \$1.50. Phone Algonquin 4445.

BOXES: Reserved balcony boxes, seating 10 to 15 persons, for individuals and groups, at \$15.00 and \$20.00. Half of the boxes already reserved by groups of artists, writers, publishers and the press.

The boxes, strictly private overlook the main dance floor.

Come In Costume

A new Masses Ball is more fun in costume. 40 writers and artists are coming all decked out in blazing colors. Dress in a costume representing a book by a New Masses author and get autographed.

Suggested titles: Alay Oop! (Wm. Gropper); The 42nd Parallel (John Dos Passos); Millions of Cats (Wanda Gag); Jews Without Money (Michael Gold); Generals Die in Bed (Chas. Yale Harrison); Strike! Mary Heaton Vorse; Not Without Laughter (Langston Hughes); On My Way (Art Young); Voices of October (Freeman. Kunitz, Lozowick); Chelsea Rooming House (Horace Gregory); The Company (Edwin Seaver).

**WEBSTER HALL
DECEMBER 5**

Admission \$1.50 in advance

(\$2.50 at the door)



Drawn by Phil Bard

NEW MASSES

1910—Fifth Year of the New Masses -- 1926 -- Twenty First Year of the Masses—1930

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

What proportion of the American working class is unemployed, no one can say. Each new set of figures expose the insufficiency of the last and the blight in working-class communities overshadows the most comprehensive calculation. Unemployment is the immediate burning problem of the American workers as a whole.

Outside the working class there is no disposition to grapple with this problem except frivolously. Men are out of work because of capitalist overproduction. Industry is disorganized, demoralized. Here is one emergency that obviously calls for social reorganization of industry—of plants, raw materials, means of communication, warehouses, food supply, distributive centers—with a view to planned production and distribution under unified control. Merely to mention this, however, is to indicate the futility of appealing in the name of the requirements of industry. In the present crisis, as at all other times, American capitalists are concerned, not with the requirements of industry (much less of society), but with the needs of capitalism. The Fish Committee even chooses this as a time for attack against trade with the Soviet Union, although the stimulus of foreign trade is recognized as especially desirable.

Shortly after the stock market collapse of October-November 1929, President Hoover called to conference in Washington all the great captains of industry, together with Lieutenant William Green, and it was duly agreed that the economic crisis would be met by elaborate construction programs on the part of railroads, public utilities, etc. Alas, less construction work has been undertaken by the railroad, public utility and other companies in 1930 than for many years before the imposing pledges at Washington were announced.

At present American capitalists have nothing more constructive to offer than the silly preachment: "Buy Now, and Bring Back Prosperity!"

For many months capitalism refused to acknowledge the existence of mass unemployment in America. Now the length of the breadlines has forced official recognition. The unemployed are recognized! But not as workers with a claim upon industry. Not as men and women whose condition challenges the ability of a system to support the lives of those upon whom it must rely to make its wheels go round. Committees of rich men and public officials are set up to hand out a little charity in the form of occasional groceries to perhaps a few thousand of the many millions of unemployed. Other committees—there is one in Wall Street—make a show of creating a couple of hundred special three-day-a-week jobs; wages, \$15 a week with the benediction of William Green. The men who head these committees are directors in corporations that are laying off workers by the thousands.

Meantime, from Governor Roosevelt of New York to President Green of the A. F. of L. there is a united capitalist front against

a Workers' Insurance Bill, for the essential reason that such a bill implies the claim of the workers upon industry. Implications of this sort capitalists flee from, as from the devil. They will look before them only as the workers force them to.

Councils of unemployed workers have been formed in many localities under the leadership of the Communist Party. In some places, as in Detroit, members of these councils have carried furniture belonging to workers back to dwellings from which they had been evicted, and stood guard over it in defiance of landlords and police. This is good work, particularly if coupled with demands upon the municipal authorities for governmental action against evictions. Only in the organized pressure of the workers is there any real hope for the unemployed.

Idealistic tendencies

The award of the Nobel prize for literature to Sinclair Lewis is no longer "news." The photographs, interviews, statements, and editorials are now buried in the newspaper morgues and at the dinner tables and the restaurants where people occasionally talk about literary events, everybody has had his say on the subject. Yet there are some people who feel that the *New Masses* is duty-bound to express its opinion on the award. Why in hell should it? Nobody can give a good reason.

The Nobel prize is awarded to writers of books that have "idealistic tendencies." In capitalist civilization that means, actually, bourgeois literature of "idealistic tendencies." Why the committee in Sweden chooses to award the prize to one author rather than another is a mystery inherent in all literary prizes. It seems, for example, that Anatole France is a writer of books with "idealistic tendencies" but Thomas Hardy isn't. Perhaps the Swedish committee no longer adheres to the letter of Nobel's bequest. Perhaps it wished to "recognize" the United States in the world of letters, and looked around for its most representative author. In that case, Sinclair Lewis is about as good a choice as any.

Main Street, *Babbitt* and *Elmer Gantry* are outstanding portraits of the middle-class which dominates American culture. In any event, the award of the \$46,000 makes little difference to anybody except the recipient and perhaps to one or two defeated candidates who may reflect on the "injustice" of the world. The award cannot essentially affect the value of Sinclair Lewis' work, one way or the other, or the development of American literature. Lewis knew this when he turned down the Pulitzer prize. He chose to disregard it when he accepted the Nobel prize. Pulitzer wanted to reward books of a "moral" tendency, Nobel of an "idealistic tendency." What is the difference? About \$44,000. In which case, all things considered, one can hardly "blame" Lewis for taking that difference into consideration.

What concerns us, because it is more important, is the recognition by the Nobel prize committee, and by Lewis himself that he

Merry Christmas

*Merry Christmas, China,
From the gun-boats in the river,
Ten-inch shells for Christmas gifts,
And peace on earth forever.*

*Merry Christmas, India,
To Gandhi in his cell,
From righteous Christian England,
Ring out, bright Christmas bell!*

*Ring Merry Christmas, Africa,
From Cairo to the Cape!
Ring Halleluiah! Praise the Lord!
(For murder and for rape.)*

*Ring Merry Christmas, Haiti!
(And drown the voodoo drums—
We'll rob you to the Christian hymns
Until the next Christ comes.)*

*Ring Merry Christmas, Cuba!
(While Yankee domination
Keeps a nice fat president
In a little half-starved nation.)*

*And to you down-and-outers,
("Due to economic laws")
Oh, eat, drink, and be merry
With a bread-line Santa Claus—*

*While all the world hails Christmas,
While all the church bells sway!
While, better still, the Christian guns
Proclaim this joyous day!*

*While holy steel that makes us strong
Spits forth a mighty Yuletide song:
SHOOT Merry Christmas everywhere!
Let Merry Christmas GAS the air!*

LANGSTON HUGHES

is not a "subversive" author. In the Wilsonian era, when the Liberals dominated the literary scene, Lewis was looked on as a critic of the status quo, America's great satirist. Actually he was only America's great mimic. The time came when he admitted, in signed articles and in press interviews, that he really liked *Main Street* and *Babbitt*, and that *Elmer Gantry* was neither an attack nor a defense of the church but merely an objective portrait.

The novels of Sinclair Lewis are the expression, in art, of H. L. Mencken's "Americana." They kid the weaknesses of the booboisie, but there is no essential criticism of capitalist society in them. Suppose Elmer Gantry were a sincere, intelligent, noble fellow instead of a Tartuffe, would that make the church as an institution any better or religion as a spiritual racket any less poisonous? Suppose *Main Street* had cooperated with Carroll Kennicot in her childish notions of improving the world, would that have made capitalist civilization any the less monstrous? In the one case where Lewis sought a positive solution for the problems he tackled, he chose a scientist as the hero, and *escape* as the answer to the corruption of science by capitalism. Perhaps *Arrowsmith* fulfills the requirement for an "idealistic tendency," for it is the essence of idealism to "solve" problems by evading them.

This, of course, is the only possible solution for a liberal writer who concerns himself with the middle-class and its problems within the accepted framework of capitalist society. No writer can lift himself by his bootstraps. Lewis has drawn several enormous caricatures of middle-class society; his work has been, on that score, extremely valuable. Had he exercised his talents as mimic and journalist in describing working class life the result would have been a fizzle.

On The Literary Front—

Consider the case of that other Sinclair (whose first name is Upton). Here we have a legitimate candidate for the Nobel prize, for if books have "idealistic tendencies" they are his. He, in working class literature, was as great a pioneer as Lewis in

middle-class literature, if we keep in mind only American writing. Yet Upton Sinclair, too, is essentially concerned with the middle class. For him a coal strike is the background for the adventures of a college hero; oil scandals the background for the spiritual struggles of a gilded youth; the Sacco-Vanzetti execution the background for the *noblesse oblige* of a highminded Boston lady. In their time both Sinclairs did tremendous work and they are entitled to their share of "glory" and such prizes as they can get.

What concerns us more is that we have reached a point where the liberal literature of the first three decades of this country has exhausted itself, just as liberalism has exhausted itself.

This is now generally recognized. If the Humanist hullabaloo means anything, it means that the middle class youth has recognized this bankruptcy and is seeking escape in religion, Platonism, the Hindu classics and "salvation by faith" in licking the boots of More and Babbitt; and when it does think of the real world, it repudiates liberalism, "humanitarianism," and socialism, in favor of snobbishness, private property, and Mussolini.

On the other hand, the revolutionary movement has begun to affect a group of writers whose eyes are focused not on a mythical Peru or early Christianity or Anglo-Catholicism but on the class struggle where the strike at Cerro de Pasco is more vital than the Bridge of San Louis Rey. For this group, the period of Sinclair Lewis and Upton Sinclair is also a closed period. It recognizes that the moral indignation of the one and the caricatures of the other are no longer adequate approaches to the worldwide struggle against capitalism which marks our epoch. New themes drawn from this struggle, new methods dictated by the class battles that grow sharper day by day, separate the rising group of revolutionary writers from their liberal precursors.

All this has nothing to do with the Nobel prize. The struggle on the literary "front" will be little affected by whether awards are made to Lewis, Dreiser, Eddie Guest or Paul Elmer More. We would be perhaps more interested if Sinclair Lewis, remembering his energetic campaign for the International Labor Defense in Pittsburgh, will send that organization a chunk of Nobel's \$46,000 for the struggle against "class justice."

Christmas Chimes and Prison Cells—

Chimes from a nearby church are playing Christmas carols for the unemployed selling apples to passersby, given to them by the bighearted commission houses at \$2.25 a box. The *New Republic* publishes a page of Yeat's charming lyrics

*Earth in beauty dressed
Awaits returning spring.*

At the Civic Club, Roger Baldwin assures his audience that the Imperial Valley workers convicted under the "criminal syndicalist" act and serving terms of up to 42 years will probably be freed within five or six years. The liberals in their soft leather chairs breathe a little freer. The Christmas spirit is here. The *New York Times* prints news releases issued by the Civil Liberties telling that Communist workers in jail will not be bailed out by the Union. More of that Christlike, Christmas spirit.

Meanwhile in a dozen prisons and in more than fifty jails workers are caged in iron cells for their activity in the revolutionary movement. During the March 6th unemployment demonstrations 464 men and women were arrested in the United States. In the first ten months of the current year over 6,000 workers were arrested; they were defended by the International Labor Defense. A tabulated list of beatings, lynchings, tortures and deportations suffered by workers for their militant activity during the year 1930 would read like a page out of a history of the Inquisition.

Ring out the merry chimes in this "land of the free"! Three Woodlawn, Pa. workers are serving five year sentences in Blawnox under the Flynn Anti-Sedition Act. And the Centralia I.W.W.s and Mooney and Billings are still behind prison bars after nine and fourteen years.

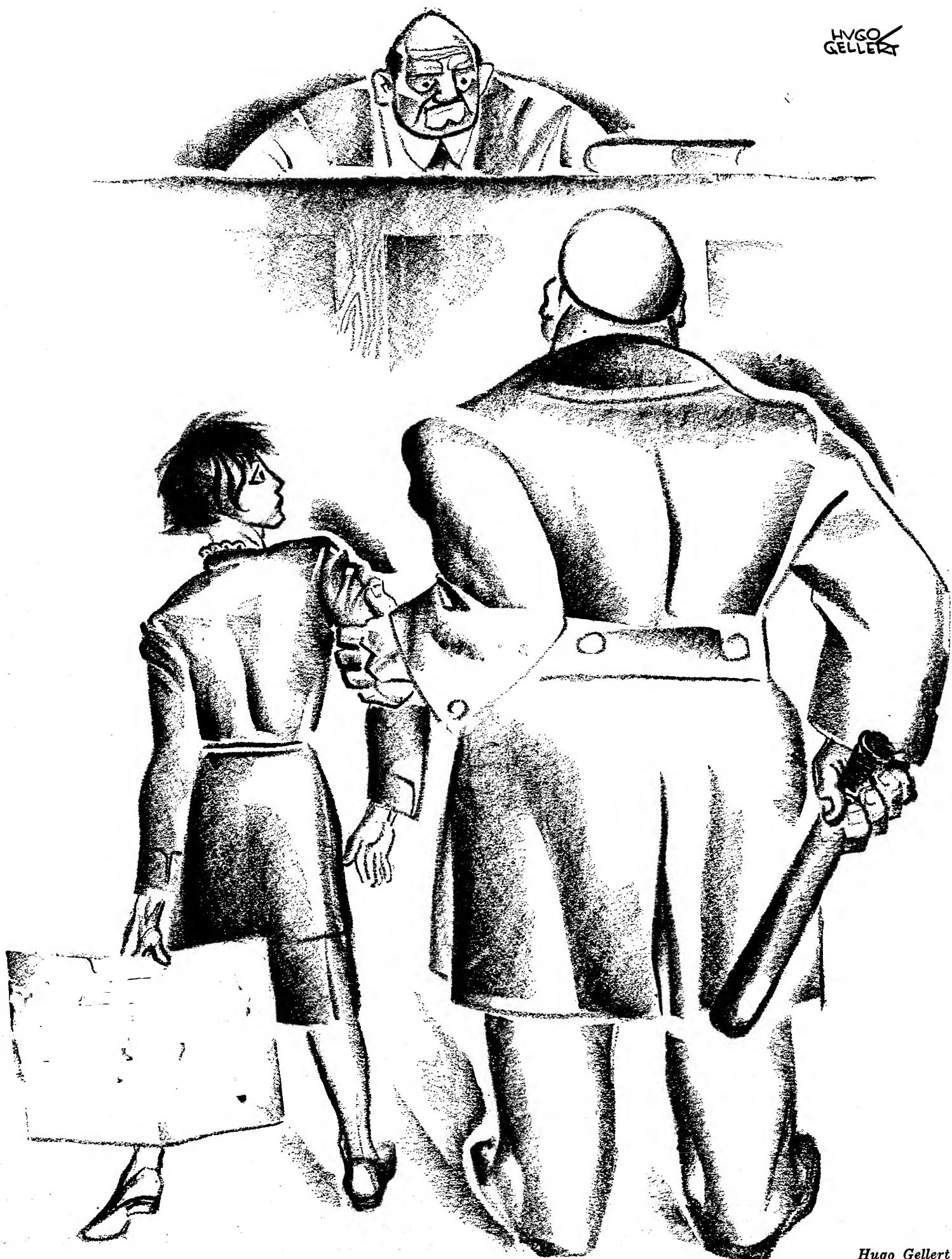
These are cold blooded facts of the class struggle, this year of Hoover, 1930.

What can we do about it? Every bit of our energy, and every penny for defense, of course.

But while these militant workers are in prison, their wives and children must be provided for. An occasional dollar to the prisoners themselves will allow a bit of fruit at times, or tobacco, perhaps a book, to make the days and months more bearable. *Have you ever been in prison?*

Mail your contribution to the Prisoners Pledge Fund, care of International Labor Defense, 80 East 11 St., New York, N. Y.

THE EDITORS



Hugo Gellert

(An incident in the fight against Injunctions prohibiting strike picketing)

JUDGE: (Paid \$10,000 for his job): "What's the charge?"

COP: "Assault and battery, your honor. She attacked me."



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PAUL PETERS

MEN OF STEEL

(You are now hard up against the furnace. Like a low brick house, it cuts diagonally across the stage from the right foreground to the left rear. It has five doors which pull up on hooks and chains. Each door has at its bottom a peep-hole, like a red eye. When the doors are up a fan of red light shoots out, ruffled with gas. Then you can look into the blinding white heart of the furnace.

(Otherwise the stage is dark. Vaguely you see the uneven floor: the dolomite pile, the ore pile, the testing anvil, some tapping rods. Downstage at the extreme left is an alcove formed by the water box and a cluster of lockers.)

(Pop and Charlie are talking in the shadows of the lockers).

Pop: If they catch you, they're going to hurt you, Charlie.

Charlie: I guess I know what I'm doing.

Pop (in mild anger): You know you aint doing right.

Charlie: Aw, right, right! What the hell's right? I'm looking out for myself. Aint that what everybody else is doing?

Pop: That aint what your maw and me taught you, son. We tried to raise you to be a good man.

Charlie (bitter): Yeah. You was a good man—and look what you are. I don't want to be no working man when I'm fifty and have the boss feel he's giving me charity because he lets me break my back hanging on to my job. I been keeping my eyes open. I seen others get theirs. I seen how they're getting it too. And believe me, I'm going to get mine.

Pop: By being a spy, Charlie. By selling out the men you're working with. You got off on the wrong track somewhere, son. Ever since you went to Chicago.

Rabbitine (emerging from behind the furnace): Charlie! Hey, Charlie!

Charlie: Yes. What you want?

Rabbitine: You better start digging her out, Charlie.

Charlie: All right. I'm coming. (he seizes his rods from the locker, turns, adds lamely) Well, I guess you better get back to work, Pop.

(The Old man drifts away slowly. Charlie goes back to the furnace. Rabbitine has meanwhile started shovelling ore into the middle door, which has swung open. Enter Marty).

Rabbitine: Give me a hand, Marty. She needs a dose of ore.

(Marty joins him. They alternate a moment, swinging their arms across their faces to protect themselves from the heat. Both wear cobalt goggles. Both drip. Enter Jelly-Roll singing).

Marty (pausing): Hey, Jelly-Roll! Where the hell you working at?

Marty (stopping to mop his face: he shoves his goggles up his forehead): Say, what you trying to do? Empty the stock yard? How much ore you dumping in there?

Rabbitine (stooping to look into his furnace): I guess that's enough. (calling to the left)

Yeouw! (the furnace door swings down slowly. Both men wipe the sweat off their faces).

Jelly-Roll: Dey gonna tap dis baby soon?

Marty: Don't you see us shovelling ore?

Jelly-Roll (laughing): Naw suh! I don't see you. I aint looking. White folks always looking for work to do. Colored folks knows better. Dey don't do no mo'n dey has to. Work don't get you nowheres nohow, 'cepting you do it fo' yo' self.

Rabbitine: Where's the gang? You better get a rod up.

Marty: Where's Jimmy and Spinu?

Jelly-Roll: Oh, dey behind de furnace wid some of de men—(Enter Jimmy and Spinu. A coal-and-iron policeman goes by.)

Jimmy: There goes another one of them coal-and-iron cops.

Jelly-Roll: Yas suh! De woods is full of dem coal-and-iron cops tonight. Dey musta put about a million new ones on de force. You can't lift yo' foot widout scrunching half a dozen of 'em.

Marty: Must be a lot of back pay coming to all the stool-pigeons in this place. So they make policemen out of them.

A Scene from a Proletarian Play

Rabbitine (examining his furnace): What's this I hear about Dan Strang and some kind of a gang, Jelly-Roll?

Jelly-Roll: I just hear dey was coming, dat's all, Rabbitine. Dat's what everybody say, anyhow. Man, dar sho' hell gonna break loose in dis hyar place. I just come up t'rough de rolling mill and de soaking pit, and everybody sneaking around and talking kind of quiet, buzz, buzz, buzz, like de whole mill was on fire. Feels to me like dar's trouble coming, boys; feel it in my bones, just as sho' as I feel rain.

Marty: Let it come. I'm waiting for it.

Spinu (gesturing): Me, I wait too.

Rabbitine: Yeah, you jaw-heroes! Look what you did last time. Came crawling back with your tail between your legs.

(Enter a workman on the run. Several others immediately join the group)

Workman (panting with excitement): Say, some one says the whole labor gang and the boiler house crew is quitting.

Spike (a gangling American youth, tow-headed, looks like an urbanized farm boy) Aw, that's a god-damned lie!

Workman: The checker-chamber boys are standing down in the pit arguing about it, I tell you. I seen 'em. Go and look for yourself.

Jelly-Roll: Nobody likes to get deir wages cut. Man, it sho' hard enough to live anyhow, widout getting yo' wages cut.

Spike: That's better than starving, aint it?

Marty: By and by they'll have you working and starving too.

Rabbitine: Aw, you're always belly-aching about something.

Spike: That's just Bolshevism, that's all.

Marty (heated): I don't give a damn what you call it. We're the guys that's doing the work, aint we? Why aint we getting something out of it? I want some of my say when I'm through. It that's Bolshevism, then hell, yes! I'm a Bolshevik.

Men (everybody at once): Now you talking, Marty!

Aw, horse-manure!

That kind of talk don't get you nowheres.

He's right, aint he?

Jimmy: Do you think they'll get in, Marty?

A Workman: Who?

Another Workman: Danny and his gang.

Spike: Them guys is just agitators, that's all. Everything's all right till you get a bunch of them snakes in the grass. Then there's always trouble stirred up.

Jelly-Roll: Dis company sho' got a heap of dem coal-and-iron cops. Dis aint gonna be nothing easy, man. Somebody gonna get his guts shot out before it's over. You mind my word. Um-un!

First Workman (laughing): You ought to see Old Hot Nose. Having a regular fit. Running around like he got ants in his pants.

Second Workman: Hot Nose, hell! He can't do nothing.

Rabbitine: You watch: they'll get the Wild Bull down here. He'll do something.

First Workman: You going out if everybody goes, Jelly-Roll?

Jelly-Roll (hesitating, half-laughing): I don't know, men. Now, honest, I don't know. White folks don't want no nigger in deir union nohow.

Several Men: Ah, hell, Jelly-Roll.

Jelly-Roll: Uh-um! I knows white folks. I aint lived no twenty-five years in Gawgia fo' nothing.

Spike (brazen): Well, here's one guy that aint going to be a sucker. I aint going out, I'll tell you that.

Spinu: You scab, huh?

Spike: Yeah, I'm going to scab. And I don't care who knows it either.

Marty: You want to look out you don't get your block knocked off.

Spike: Ho! That don't frighten me. Who's going to do it?

Rabbitine: There's a bunch of mean Irish around here, Spike.

Spike: Yeah, I know the Irish. I heard them bark before. Nobody aint going to frighten me out on no Hunky strike. That's all this is going to be: a Hunky strike. A bunch of guineas that aint never satisfied. Come over here bringing all them foreign

radical notions with 'em. If they don't like what we got here, why the hell don't they go back where they come from?

First Workman: You're just talking through your hat now, Spike.

(From offstage a distant shout)

Jimmy: Listen to that!

Men (subsiding, listening: another great shout):

Boy, there's something going on out there.

Man, listen to them babies pop!

Here comes Ollie.

Hey, Ollie! What's all the fireworks about?

A Workman (comes running, excited, shouting): The blast furnace crew is walking out, boys!

Men (milling around him): Christ alive! The hell you say!

Workman: The big boy himself come snorting up in his limousine, arguing with 'em. They howled him down. Wouldn't listen to him. They spit at him. They was going to beat him up. (uproar from the men).

They're fighting all over the place. Down in the streets, back in the stripper and the brickshed. The cops is chasing some of them guys all over hell. They're shooting at 'em. (he is breathless, stands panting)

(The men all talk in confusion. A thin pillar of red smoke curls up from behind the furnace. You hear Charlie cry: "Yeouw!")

Rabbitine: Hey, where you men working at? Shove a rod in.

(They stare at him confused, will-less)

Rabbitine: You hear what I'm telling you? She's ready to go. Charlie's dug her out. You got to tap her.

Marty (his blood afire): The hell with that god-damn furnace.

Men (roaring): The hell with it!

Rabbitine: Now listen, men—for the love of Christ—

Marty: Let's go out and join them!

Men: Come on. Let's go, let's go! (some start)

Rabbitine (running after them, pleading, whining): Men, listen to me. You know that aint right. She'll cook out all over the floor.

That's dangerous. It'll kill somebody. All them tons of steel going to waste! We got to tap that furnace, boys. No matter if you are going out, you got to tap that furnace first.

(The men waver: a moment of indecision: they argue)

Men: Don't listen to him.

Well, we'd better.

The hell with you, big-belly!

Sure, you got to. He's right, you got to.

Jimmy (stooping, picking up one end of a long steel rod): Lift it up, Spinu.

Spinu: No. I no work no more. I take holiday.

A Workman: Aw, come on. It won't take more than five minutes.

Spike: I don't believe the rest of them is gone out nohow.

Men (won over): We can got out afterwards. It won't be long! Come on, hop to it! Make it snappy! Lift it up, men!

(All seize the rod, carry it on their shoulders to the peep-hole in the middle door, shove it in. Rabbitine takes the end to guide it)

Rabbitine: Raise your hands up!

(Raising the end of the rod, they jab in rhythm down into the furnace: rise and fall).

Jelly-Roll: Come on, Rabbitine. Find de hole. You just poking de back.

Rabbitine (rasping, nervous in the heat): Aw, shut up, will you?

Jimmy: Christ, I'm burning up over here.

Rabbitine: Hold it steady! Don't wobble the rod. Up with your hands.

Spinu (as they push in rhythm): Push 'em! All together, push 'em!



Jacob Burck

"Train your guns on the Soviets, general, but wait until their delegates leave that disarmament conference."

Marty: That's got her. Now drive her all the way down.

(The men, grunting, give a terrific heave: the rod goes in to the hilt. Only the end men hang on. Everybody shouts. From the rear comes the familiar "Yeouw!" Now a belch of flame and gas springs up from behind. This lights up the whole shed in garish red. Over a long period the glare subsides).

Rabbitine: Pull the rod up.

Men (as they heave on it, in rhythm): Pull! Pull! Pull!

Rabbitine: Let's get the bottom now. Come on, do something. Otherwise you'll have to get another rod.

Marty: Another rod, hell!

Jelly-Roll (his voice soaring high, hilarious): Rub her belly, boys! Rub her belly! (they swing the end of the rod in rhythm, like a pendulum)

Rabbitine (letting go of the end): Outside with it! (the men drag the rod out) Shovel some dolomite in her.

(Everybody picks up his shovel... Some call "Yeouw!" Everybody rattles his shovel impatiently on the brick floor. The upstage door swings open. Forming a circle from the furnace to the dolomite pile, the men each in turn swing their shovelfuls with a wide arc to the arms into the fierce heart of the furnace)

(Suddenly from the pit below the furnace come sharp cries: "There he goes! Get him, get him!" A pistol raps out three shots. The men at the furnace stop shovelling, look at one another, questioning)

Men: Hear that? Jesus, they're coming, men, they're coming. Let's go and see.

(Everybody rushes for the back of the furnace. Jimmy has



Jacob Burck

"Train your guns on the Soviets, general, but wait until their delegates leave that disarmament conference."



Jacob Burck

"Train your guns on the Soviets, general, but wait until their delegates leave that disarmament conference."

sunk down before the open furnace door)

Marty (shouting after them): Hey, Jelly-Roll! Spinu, come back here. Something's happened to the kid.

Spinu (returning, bending over Jimmy): Que hay? Jimmy, que hay?

Marty: It's the heat, I guess. Help me carry him over to the water box. (they carry him to the left)

Marty (working over Jimmy): That kid aint never got used to the heat. He don't belong up here. He aint never going to get used to it, neither. Pull his shirt off.

Spinu (throwing water from the box on Jimmy): You all right, Jimmy, huh? Sure, you get spell, you be all right.

(A furtive figure appears in the shadow of the lockers)

Figure: Ssst! Marty!

Jimmy (coming to, groaning): O God, my head. My head's splitting!

(Spinu and Marty start helping him off to the left)

Figure: Ssst! Marty!

Marty (wheeling around): Who's calling me? Say—! How'd you get in here, Tony?

Tony (panting): I climba da wall by da viaduct.

Marty: I hear Bill Bledsoe and Danny and the gang—Where are they, Tony.

Tony (highest excitement, panting): Some sneaka inside, some waits outside: everywhere, everywhere, Marty. We gotta whole blast furnace crew. We gotta whole rolling milla crew: alla come out with us. And da labor ganga, and da boiler housa crew. You helpa us, Marty? Danny, he say you helpa us.

Marty (infected with his excitement): What you want me to do?

Tony: Tella everybody, throwa da shovel away. You hear, Marty: tella everybody, "Whenna whistle blow, throwa da shovel away, runa fora da gate."

(The crowd has begun to surge back from behind the furnace. At the head, surrounded by several coal-and-iron police are Hot Nose and the Wild Bull).

Wild Bull: You sure you saw him coming up here?

Hot Nose: Oh, he's up here, all right.

Wild Bull: Well, if we get our hands on him—

(Tony, seeing the police, loses his head, makes a bolt for the right)

Spike: There he goes now!

Hot Nose: Shoot him! Shoot him!

(A moment of incredible confusion. The police chase Tony. Everybody stampedes for cover. One of the police shoots again. Tony stumbles. He is captured, brought forward; blood drips from a wound in his chest).

Wild Bull (roaring): What the hell you doing in here? You know what's going to happen to you?

Tony (riding a feverish crest of ecstasy): Everybody, whena whistle blow, throwa da shovel away—

Hot Nose: You god-damn Dago, you're going to spend a couple of years in the pen for this.

Tony (arms wide, to the gaping men): They all come out with us already—da blast furnace crew, da labor ganga—da rolling mill—

Wild Bull: Shut that wop's mouth!

(Tony spits at the Wild Bull. Then he bursts into demoniac laughter)

Tony: You thinka you holda me, Irish? Ha, ha, ha! They come aftera me. They smasha your face. (seeing Hot Nose he burns with rage) You—you stay outa way—you hide ina dark, Johnny Bull. Tony da Wop, he sticka knife in your guts. Tony da Dago, he paya you back. (he tries to break loose to get at Hot Nose.)

Hot Nose: Hold him! For God's sake, hold him!

(Now the whistle blows: a shrill, provocative blast. Nervous movement in the mob: a silent, ill-at-ease feeling. Each man looks mutely at his neighbor. You feel a storm gathering)

Wild Bull: You men, go out and fight for your jobs!

Tony (chanting, ecstatic): Everybody, runa fora da gate!

Hot Nose (snarling at the cops): Make him shut up, can't you?

Wild Bull: Get your shovels, men. Protect the mill. It's your mill, men; it's your bread and butter. You're fighting for your homes and your living now. That bunch aint going to do nothing for you. They want to throw you out of your jobs because they aint got none themselves.

Tony (chanting, ecstatic): Everybody, throwa da shovel away—

(Hot Nose lashes him across the mouth. Tony breaks from his captors, springs like a tiger on Hot Nose. Shrieking, his arms working like flails, he drives Hot Nose with stinging blows on the face to the water box. Then, lifting him bodily, Tony throws

him in the water and proceeds gleefully to strangle him)

Tony: I fixa you, Johnny Bull. Thisa time, I fixa you!

(Cries from the men. Several men pull Tony away. He resists, fights. Then, abruptly, with a groan, he crumples in their arms. Hot Nose is plucked dripping from the box)

Men: Look at the blood. He's fainted. Jesus, they must have shot him!

(The leading invaders now appear from behind the furnace. They stop cautiously, survey the scene. A moment of indecision. They are armed with clubs, shovels, rods, pieces of iron. A bloodcurdling: "Yeouw!" Men meanwhile carry Tony off)

Men: Here they are now! Hey, Danny! Hey, Mike! Hey, Johnny! (some one imitates Tony) Everybody, throwa da shovel away! (laughter; many together:) Yeouw!

Wild Bull (sizing up the situation in a flash): Come on, Jessel. We got to get out of here. We can't do nothing now.

(Hot Nose, spluttering, dripping, follows him hurriedly off. The police run after them. The men jostle them, jeer at them)

Men: Look at them run! There goes the Big Wild Bull! Bye-bye Hot Nose. What's your hurry, boys! What's your hurry?

Marty (wide gestures, imitating Wild Bull): Sure, we was men then! We worked twenty-four hours a day, summer and winter, for three dollars a week. We loaded them furnaces by hand, by God! Ah, me lads, we was men then!

(Rough laughter. The crowd of invaders comes down, mingles with the others. Greetings and cries)

Mike (with a bloodthirsty look in his eye): Where the Wild Bull?

Marty (having the time of his life): He just sneaked out the back door. He left his card for you. He said he was so damned sorry, but nature was calling him, he just coudn't stay no longer and visit with you, Mike, (great roaring laughter)

Dan: They all gone? Hot Nose too?

Johnny: Hot Nose and me, we got make talk together.

Marty: You're too late, Johnny. Hot Nose went home to little Lizzie. Yes, boys, home to Liz. Poor Johnny Bull got homesick for little Lizzie Heifer! (more laughter)

Emil Jahns: All these big men, these big bosses, they run away. Us they tell when we complain: "That furnace aint hot. Aint you no man? Can't you stand no day's work?" And then they run away. And to think that all these years we was afraid of them yet!

Mike: We go catch 'em bastards. Come on, men!

(Shouts and a surge)

Dan: Come back here!

Bill (jumping up on an anvil): Now listen to me, all you men. (Voices: "Ssh! Pipe down. Let him talk." Quiet) I don't want nobody running around and smashing up anything. You hear? We got work to do. This fight aint over yet, men. It's just begun! (rattle of shovels on floor). And we're going to have to fight plenty. Wait till you see the papers tomorrow. Even if you was as gentle as lambs, they're going to say you was running around here like a bunch of wild hyenas with the rabies. (laughter) So we don't want nobody destroying any property, you get me?

Mike: You mean we no can smash charger, Bill? (everybody laughs)

Bill Bledsoe: No.

Johnny: Not even throw over dolomite machine? (more laughter)

Bill: No. You can't touch nothing. This is a strike; this aint no wrecking party. Now we're going to march through this mill and then we're going to march downtown. Quiet. Orderly. We're in war now, men. We're soldiers: soldiers of the working class. We got to have discipline if we want to win. And we're going to win, aint we? (roar and rattle of shovel) Come on, then: follow me!

Marty: Wait a minute! (running up to the furnace door) Everybody, throwa da shovel away!

(with a great swing, he pitches his shovel far into the furnace. A roar from the men. All five doors are immediately swung open. Everybody swings his shovel into the furnace, rushes off, laughing, yipping.)

(Rabbitine, Charlie, Spike, Pop, and Jelly-Roll, who have been on the edges of the mob, remain. They draw together)

Rabbitine: Now what you know about that? I aint never seen nothing like that.

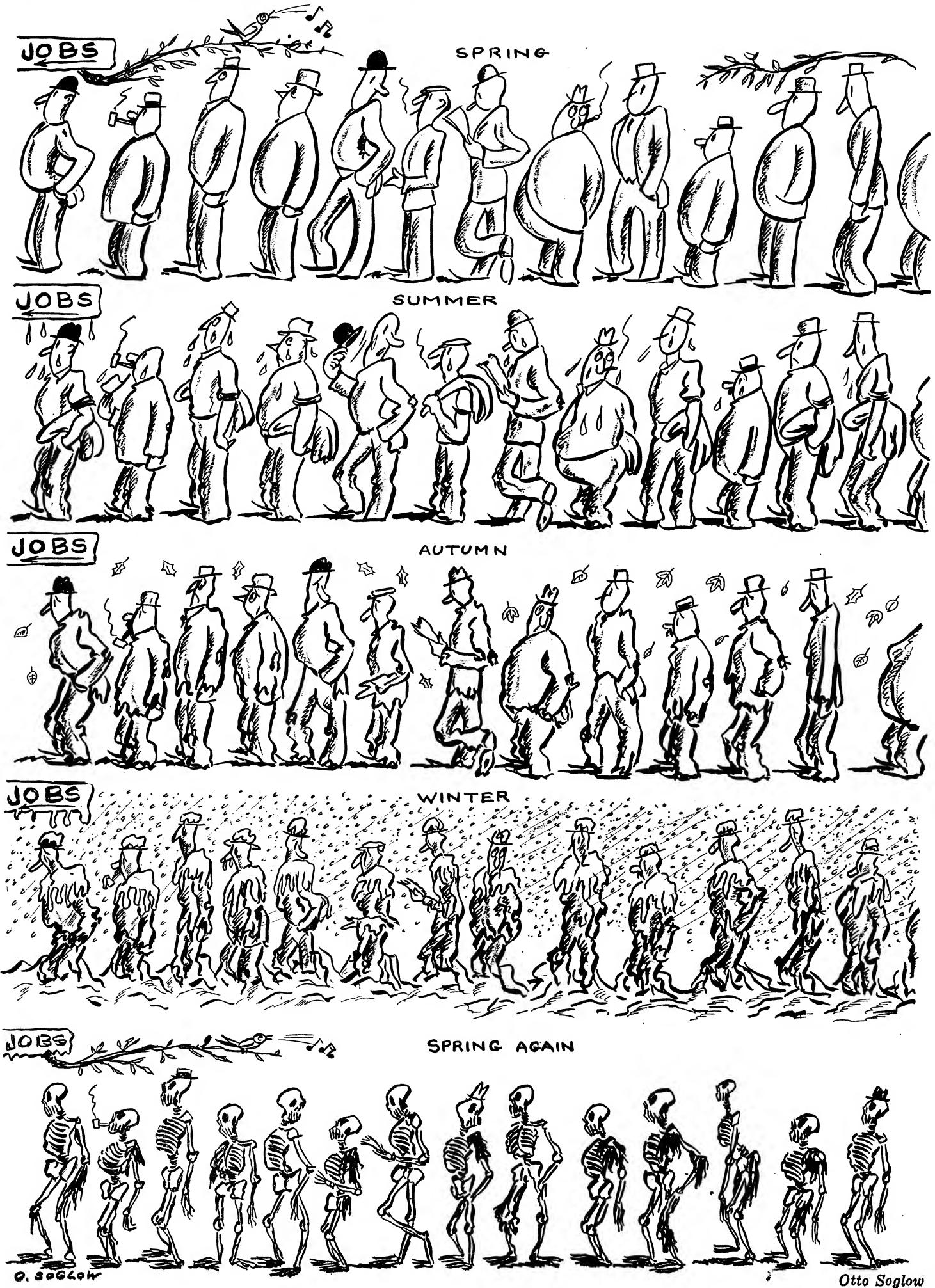
Charlie: The god-damn fools!

Spike: You aint going to quit, are you, Jelly Roll?

Pop: I can't quit. It's only nine months till I go on pension.

Jelly-Roll (looking around him with some contempt; laughing): Well suh—I'll tell you—(he pitches his shovel aside) I reckon dis baby aint gonna work when none of de real men aint. (He starts off. The furnace fires vanish)

The First Year Is the Hardest—



PHILIP SCHATZ

TEACHERS AND COPS

I

When I was four years old, my father took my mother and me from New York to Cleveland where the building trades were booming, and where, incidentally, the Socialist Party had a strong footing.

We were always harassed by poverty, but in our new home our economic status was slightly improved because my father switched from painting signs to painting houses.

My father had been active in the Socialist Party in New York and in Cleveland our house again became a rendezvous of rebels.

But intermingled with my earliest memories of revolutionary discussion are recollections of my mother's struggles to raise the rent money and periods of unemployment which depressed my father into a gray silence.

Ours was not abject poverty. Sometimes we had electric lights and we always had running water. Ours was just the degrading struggle to forestall the landlord's displeasure and to buy shoes before the home-made cardboard inner soles wore out again. Our neediness never touched me vitally until I was well along in elementary school, thanks to the ingenuity which most working class mothers possess.

Strangely enough, one of my earliest memories is not directly connected with the atmosphere of radical thought in which I grew up.

For a long time I was deeply troubled by a discussion I overheard between my parents. It concerned the Triangle shirtwaist factory fire in which 147 girls lost their lives.

I was too young to understand the meaning of death but I was tremendously disturbed by the horror in my mother's eyes as she listened to my father's account of the tragedy.

I was older when the armed mercenaries of Rockefeller set fire to the tents of strikers in Ludlow and shot men, women and children as they fled from the flames.

Later I gleaned a more direct knowledge of the class struggle from the talk of my elders. The Homestead steel strike, the Pullman strike, the imprisonment of Debs, the persecution of Moyer, Pettibone and Haywood, the tragedy of the Danbury hats, the Haymarket Riots—all these things were table topics in the impoverished, radical household of my parents.

These were my first encounters with the social realities among which I lived.

The earnest manner in which these things were discussed made a deep lasting impression on me. As I grew older I began to grope for some explanation of these appalling happenings which made my mother compress her lips with bitterness and made my father snarl with rage as he read the newspapers.

II

By the time I had reached my fifth year in grammar school, I had some understanding of the ideas and events which furnished the foundations of my family's major interest—Socialism.

The Socialist Party in Cleveland had grown and prospered to such a degree that it was able to buy a house in which to set up a radical center. It was known as the Socialist Labor Lyceum.

One day my father led me into the building to a room filled with noisy, bright-faced children. It was my matriculation in the Socialist Sunday School.

Here a new world was opened for me. There were things here I had never heard of in school. The instructors talked about books which had nothing to do with spelling or arithmetic lessons. A young woman with a pleasant voice and an heroic bust read to us from *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London.

From this we went to a brief elementary course in biology, and then into studies of the beginnings of man's organized effort to earn a collective living. We read from profusely illustrated books about the prehistoric tree-dwellers, the cave-dwellers and the cliff people. We learned how, by dint of their collective effort, they

successfully pitted their puny bodies and their cunning minds against the cruel sabre-tooth tiger and the shaggy mammoth elephants.

We learned songs and the incidental history of the revolutionary movement. The songs included socialist parodies on hymns, folk songs, and popular tunes, I. W. W. classics, and the "Marseillaise." Sometimes we sang the "Internationale."

We heard of Spartacus and the origin of the Red Flag, and we were enlightened on the origins of the First of May.

The adventures in rebellion which my father still recited, our poverty, my father's deep interest in the day's news and his unceasing activity in the Socialist Party took on a new meaning to me. The lines of the class struggle and my place in it were becoming clearly defined to me.

In the mids't of my elementary political and economic education, the war clouds gathered over America to darken my newfound horizon. The Socialists in the United States, embittered by the betrayal of their European comrades, prepared to resist this country's entry into the war. The weaklings of radicalism were being weeded out, else they were retrenching on safer and more patriotic ground. I remember the disgust with which my father and his friends spoke of the desertion of Charles Edward Russell and John Spargo.

Then the United States declared war. The Socialists remained steadfast in their opposition. They declared their readiness to stand or fall by the St. Louis Platform. Without time to vent their anger at the Conscription Act, they were stunned by the Espionage Act.

Attendance at the Socialist Sunday School diminished and then stopped altogether. Even truly radical parents were unwilling to expose their children to the mercies of the American Protective League and the Loyal American League, whose vicious cohorts were raiding centers of radical life the country over.

The war madness gripped the schools almost immediately. Our mild-mannered, soft-spoken teachers became gorgons shrieking for German blood. We were exposed to every agency which would corrupt and distort impressionable young minds.

I still called myself a Socialist, but the fight of my father and his comrades against the war began to fade in my mind. It seemed to lose importance in the face of the steady pressure of schoolroom propaganda.

Before I knew it, my childish facility at composition was turned to writing schoolroom essays glorifying everything from the Red Cross to Colonel House.

We were urged to buy War Savings Stamps. To this end, our teachers even saved our pennies for us. One day I asked my mother for money with which to buy a War Savings Stamp. She denied my request but she said little else. Suddenly she began to permit me to visit the Socialist Labor Lyceum again after school hours.

Those were stirring days. Several times in the midst of meetings, strange men with jutting jaws, thick necks and bulging hip-pockets entered the hall and ordered everyone to remain seated while they inspected draft registration cards.

It was often my duty under these circumstances to slip past the Department of Justice agents surrounding the building to warn approaching comrades that there was another raid in progress.

I saw these unfriendly, overbearing radical-hunters abuse men whom I respected. I saw the rudeness and hatred with which they handled girls and women whom I knew. Once one of them bared his teeth and growled at me. I was frightened and enraged. I growled back at him. He laughed at me contemptuously.

These men were part of America's holy crusade. But how could I countenance their cruel-eyed contempt of my father and his comrades because they stood fast in their opposition to the war?

My juvenile mind became a battle-ground from which Socialism emerged victorious.

III

The crisis which won me back occurred on Labor Day in 1917. It was customary for the Cleveland Federation of Labor, on this annual holiday, to invite all candidates for public office to speak at a mass meeting.

This year the meeting was held in a huge semi-enclosed theatre in Luna Park, Cleveland's Coney Island. The usual feverish atmosphere of the park was intensified by an Ohio National Guard regiment which had headquarters in the Park. Uniformed guardsmen swarmed through the place.

C. E. Ruthenberg, then secretary of the Socialist Party in Cleveland was candidate for mayor under the slogan, "Vote for Socialism, Peace and Democracy." The two old-party candidates addressed the audience of some 5,000 persons without evoking any marked response.

When Ruthenberg stepped forward, the meeting suddenly became a wildly enthusiastic Socialist demonstration. Ruthenberg motioned for silence and when the cheering had subsided he began to speak in his even, sonorous voice, enunciating with incisive clearness and deliberation.

At the climax of his speech, half a dozen national guardsmen leaped to the platform and seized Ruthenberg. There was a roar from the crowd. A hundred men were on their feet pressing toward the platform to free him. Other guardsmen poured into the auditorium.

My father, sitting near the platform with me rose with the rest. He shouted his defiance and his face and voice terrified me.

In an excess of fear, I threw myself on him and clung to his arms to prevent him from getting into the battle. As he struggled to disengage me, I saw a guardsman approach him from behind with an upraised club. A second later I saw a metal folding chair crash down on the soldier's skull.

My father, now realizing that he couldn't leave me unprotected in the crowd, fought his way to safety while I clung to him.

By this time more guardsmen and police had arrived and the big square in the park was dotted with groups of uniformed men pursuing civilians. Frequently a fugitive was caught and half a dozen clubs felled him. Then the pursuers, standing shoulder to shoulder in a circle bent over and pounded their prostrate victim to insensibility.

Ruthenberg was arrested and hurried away under a heavy guard. No fatalities were reported but there were scores of seriously wounded.

That settled it for me. It seemed incredible that Socialists must be hunted and beaten to make the world safe for democracy.

My classroom became a political battlefield.

My subversive activity attracted the notice of the principal but no effort was made to discourage me until May, 1918. I had been absent on the First of May and when I appeared in school the following day, my teacher demanded an explanation. With misgivings I told her that I had absented myself the better to observe the international workers' holiday. She was flabbergasted.

On second thought, however, she seemed visibly cheered by the fact that she "had something" on me. The same day I was summoned to the principal's office. As I entered the sanctum, I saw the traffic cop who was generally posted in front of the building at the noon hour.

Miss Henderson, the principal, ordered me to sit down. She fired questions at me. Where did my parents come from? Was my father a citizen? Did he belong to the I. W. W.? Did he attend the May Day meeting? Did he know I had been absent? Did I know I was being very unpatriotic and that unless I stopped my foolish talk and actions I would be liable to expulsion from school? Did I realize that my parents were being very ungrateful to the country which was giving them a living and a home? Did my parents realize it? If they didn't like this country why didn't they go back from where they came instead of biting the hand that was feeding them. And, she concluded, this country didn't need any slackers anyway.



Adolph Dehn

AT THE CHARITY BALL: "First the unemployed males went out on the streets selling apples. Now their wives have gone out with them selling flowers. Really Mr. Pierpont, would you think those creatures could be so affectionate?—Or am I just sentimental?"

The policeman said nothing. He was only there, it appeared, to provide inquisitorial atmosphere. But for that insultingly obvious trick they might have frightened me. However, reassured by the policeman's presence, I kept my courage though I trembled doing it. The interview terminated with mutually unsatisfactory results. I never heard any more about the matter.

IV

New events crowded upon each other with rapidity which bewildered not only me but my elders. Ruthenberg was sentenced to a year in jail for obstructing the draft, excitement reigned in our now limited circle as a result of the revolution in Russia. The progress of the United States in the war was drawing dangerously near to the time when married men, and among them my father, would be mobilized.

Premature reports of peace lifted the nation on a wave of false hope and dashed it back to the depths of colossal disappointment.

Then the Armistice was signed and the voices of newsboys in the street were alarm clocks recalling the world from a horrible dream. My mother read the news and wept.

But America, recovered from the war for democracy abroad, turned to a war of extermination against the radicals at home. In Cleveland, the Socialist headquarters were destroyed. Only the bare structure which housed our activities remained. The party was driven to feeble, badly organized, underground activity. There was no place for children in the revolutionary movement of those troublous days.

These were my beginnings. Many things have happened since those days. Many things are changed. My father is no longer a rebel.

My mother is still steadfast. She has not lost the revolutionary inspiration which gives her the power to walk on the waters of poverty.

The revolutionary movement has risen from the fires of its own experience steeled with the strength of a Communist Party.

I have achieved manhood. Many of the bright-faced with whom I sat in the Socialist Sunday School have also grown up, but the wave of terror which ended our first venture on the sea of revolutionary activity has left them stranded high and dry.

I see them racing in circles on desert islands of bourgeois endeavor, saving their money, studying law, medicine, music, marrying comfortable white collar slaves and smiling condescendingly when they hear that I and others whom they knew in childhood are still rebels.

They have grown afraid of the turbulent seas of proletarian struggle into which they were once plunged and they content themselves with being wafted along gently on lagoons of gin by the warm, fetid breezes of liberal utterance.



Adolph Dehn

AT THE CHARITY BALL: "First the unemployed males went out on the streets selling apples. Now their wives have gone out with them selling flowers. Really Mr. Pierpont, would you think those creatures could be so affectionate?—Or am I just sentimental?"



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This Year of Hoover, 1930—As seen by 11 New Masses Artists



I. Klein

JANUARY—Hoover makes a speech promising prosperity



Phil Bard

FEBRUARY—The Captains of Industry go to Palm Beach.



William Siegel

MARCH—1546 workers arrested in unemployed demonstrations.



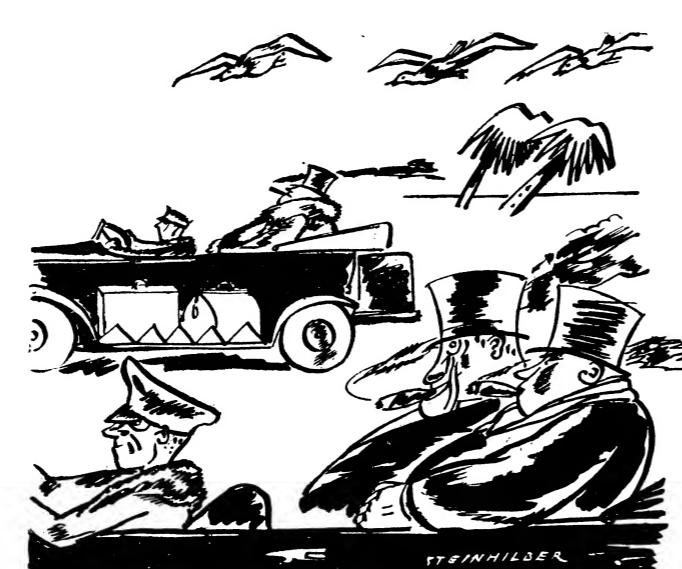
I. Klein

APRIL—On April first Hoover makes another speech promising prosperity.



Eitaro Ishigaki

MAY—U. S. workers demonstrate on May Day.



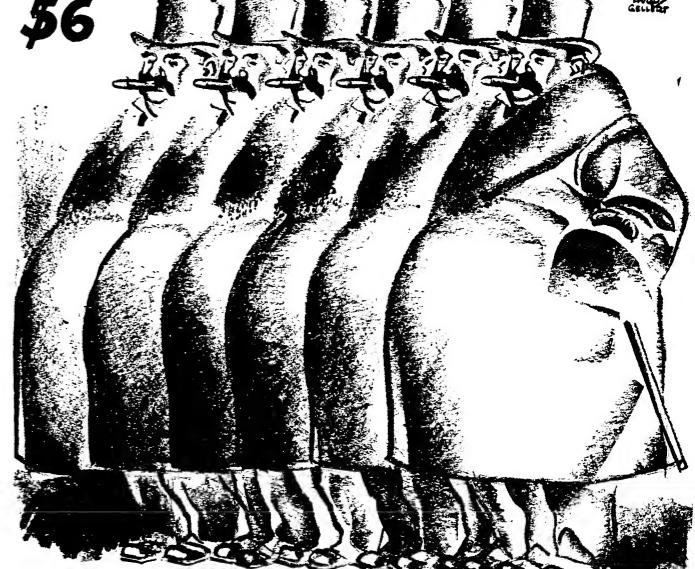
Walter Steinhilber

JUNE—Captains of Industry return from Palm Beach and go to Canada.



Morris Pass

JULY—Mooney and Billings now 14 years in prison.



Hugo Gellert

AUGUST—Former Ambassador Gerard says fifty-six (56) men rule America



Otto Soglow

SEPTEMBER—Candidate Morrow poses for a picture with Lindy's baby.



Jacob Burck

OCTOBER—More hot air from Hoover on prosperity.



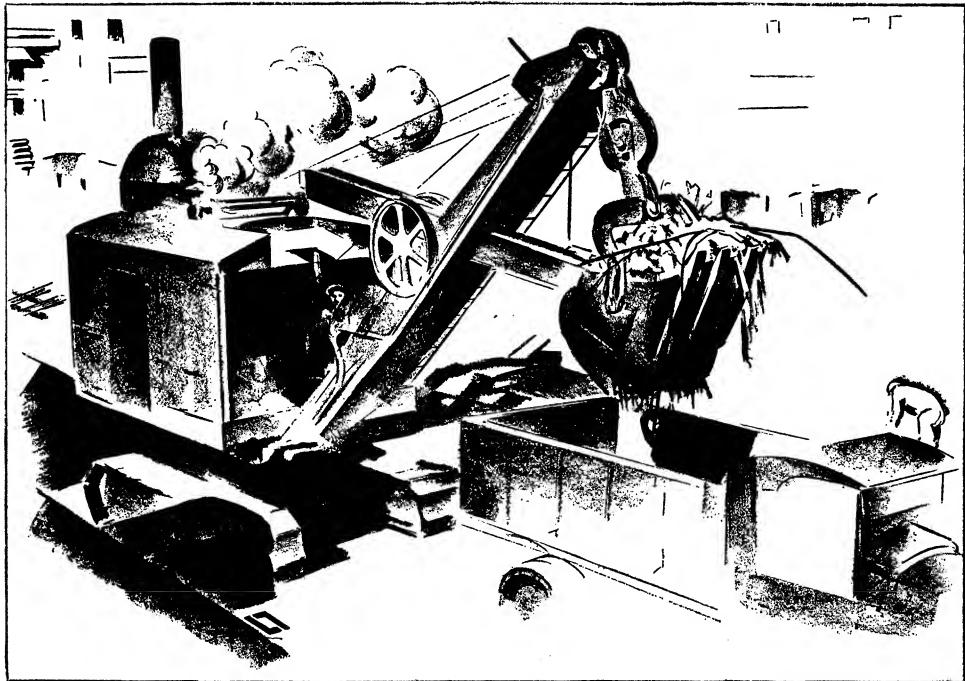
Adolph Dehn

NOVEMBER—Captains of Industry return from Canada for Thanksgiving dinner.



Anton Refregier

DECEMBER—Capitalism has not forgotten. The workers receive a few gifts.



STEAMSHOVEL

LOUIS LOZOWICK '30

THE SCAB By Melvin P. Levy

When he had been in the United States for twelve months it was winter again. He worked all autumn in the middlewestern wheat fields, harvesting. He had seen the fields all yellow and purple, even, smooth, alive before the wind. Now they were bare and dead. A long wind, bearing a bitter monotony of cold came forever over the prairies. He came into Chicago on a freight train and, with the quick-growing instinct of the worker he found that part of town, built about the rows of labor contractors' offices, where he might discover the food, the lodging, the clothing, the religion and the women that society assigned to him. Here he was quickly designated for a job of which he understood little more than that it had to do with digging and would pay six dollars for every ten hour working day. Now again with other men, this time in a chair car more wearisome and dirtier than freights, he travelled. For two days and a night.

The country changed. The smooth, rich plain with its intermittent cities briefly suggested by their railway terminals, its wide paved highways traversed, even in the winter by swift motor cars and powerful trucks, gave way to low mountains. Now the towns were dirtier and smaller: he could see the whole of them from the rear end of the train. The little rows of houses, all painted weary red, all exactly alike and divided by narrow slots of streets and uncultivated yards, were stained with coal dust. In every town was a huge pile of burning slag that filled the air with smoke, soot and a heavy, permeating stink. In the streets could be seen the corpses of little household animals, dirty snow and excrement. And in the eating places along the railroad right of way he found the food poorer and sparser than any he remembered.

In the car in which he travelled were two dozens of other men who, with him, composed a labor unit. Some of them were, like himself, bewildered foreigners unable to understand where they were going or for what purpose. But the majority, giving tone to the whole group, were different. He felt them to be cold and brutal, hard, insensate; and having in their bearing some profound ferocity, some danger in which he participated. Three of the men were in command of the rest. Israel knew they watched him during the train stops, while he ate, guarding against his escape. He knew that they carried pistols and he had seen on their veststraps, beneath their coats nice, plated badges. Yet he was no prisoner: he had no wish to escape, only a dull fear, pointless but insistent.

The train arrived at its destination late in the afternoon but, to Israel's surprise, he and his companions did not step off at the little platform station. Instead they were carried on a mile or two beyond the town and their car run there onto a side switch.

All about the car was a shiny intricacy of tracks and switches. Some of the rails were empty: they glowed with soft, dark power in the reflection of the burning slag pile and the winter day. On other rails rested an occasional box car set in the long rows of gondolas, stripped to their low board sides and their sharply concave bottoms; and appearing somehow lithe and swift. They were empty: all of them were empty; and Israel Grandi as he walked among them in the soot-covered, urine-pierced snow, saw on them the signs of disuse and decay: here a rotted, hanging board and there a broken coupling; and the tracks beneath them were set in a pattern of rust. Further, the edges of the yard were marked with a high fence of thick barbed wire against the posts on which leaned men in uniform: and on the cement road that lay between him and the tranquil hills of trees, rode other men in uniform on motor-bicycles. The scene was quiet and restful; but rest did not belong to it. The rest, the inactivity, was sinister, depressing. Israel felt in it a current of energy, concealed and dangerous—the danger he had sensed as he had travelled in the chair car full of men.

When it was dark the men were fed from a travelling kitchen set up in a freight car and then gathered together for the march to the gates. By now Israel began to understand the

nature of the job he had been given; and he hated it. And, it spite of the secrecy of the arrival, word of it had leaked out. A straggling of strikers and their wives and children were gathered at the far road edge. They huddled in the dark and only one voice called out in a low, derisive tone, "Scabs, oh you black and bloody scabs."

A Striker Speaks

(To A Judge Who Bought His Position For \$15,000)

*Others may cringe before your lofty bench,
Give reverence to your long black robes concealing
Your lack of honesty and human feeling;
But I, Your Honor, know that the dirtiest wench
Ever jailed (because no pimp brought gold to wrench
His slave back to lust's trade) is more appealing
Than you, whose Justice is but crooked dealing.
The city's sewers equal not your stench.*

*Today you may be unassailable,
Secure in knowledge that you're not alone
Among high judges who have bought and sold;
You may deal harshly with the poor, compel
Your enemies to suffer, but you'll groan
One day when we arise and stuff your throat with gold.*

WALTER SNOW

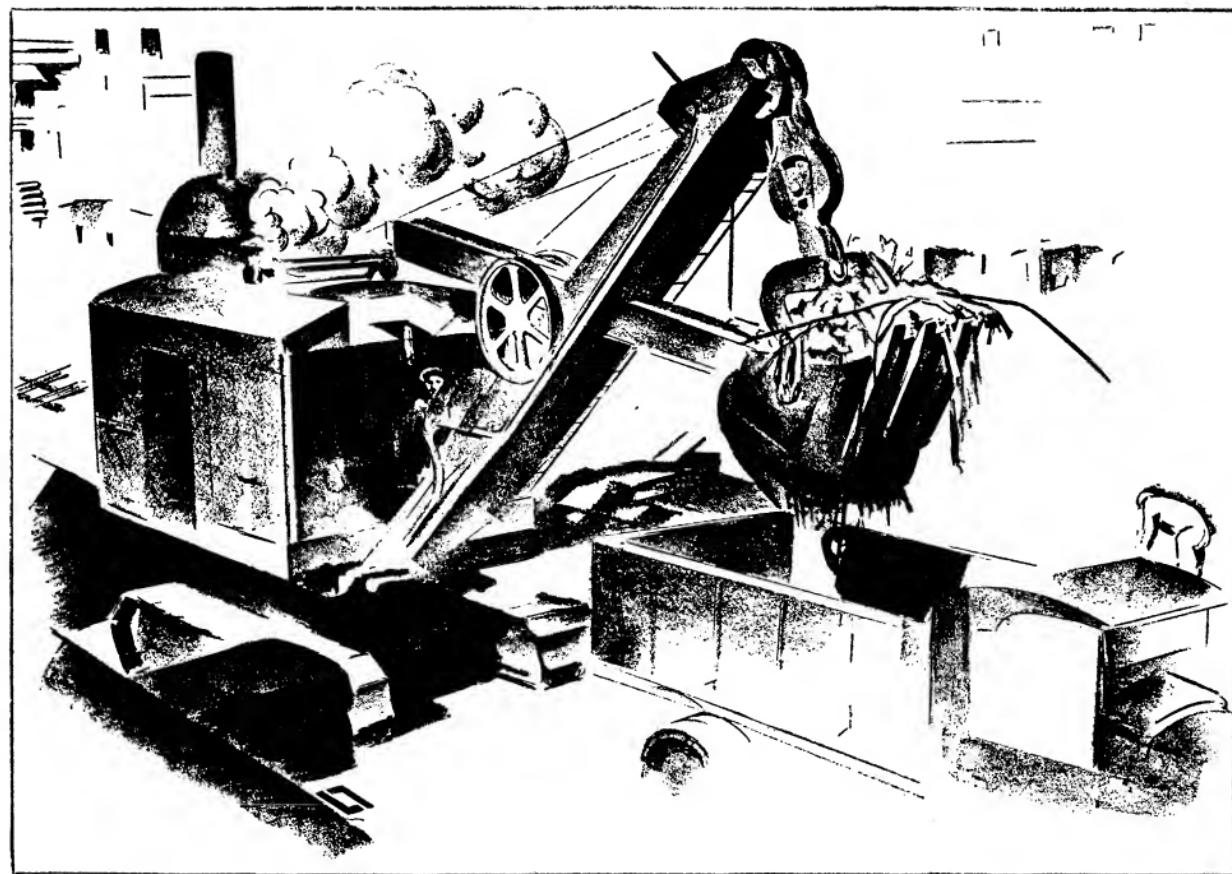
How About It, Fellow Student?

*Down near the Business School, there is a bend
In the stream, where drowned bodies come to the end
Of their journey sometimes—the men of three-score
Whom industry thinks have been used to the core
Of their being, and who now need labor no more.*

*A corpse is not a pretty sight in any case.
Soaking in water does not help its looks.
The citizens who glimpse the bloated face
After he has been landed with boat-hooks
Find that it mingles with their meals and dreams.
At least this form of exit grants, it seems,
Post-mortem vengeance on society.*

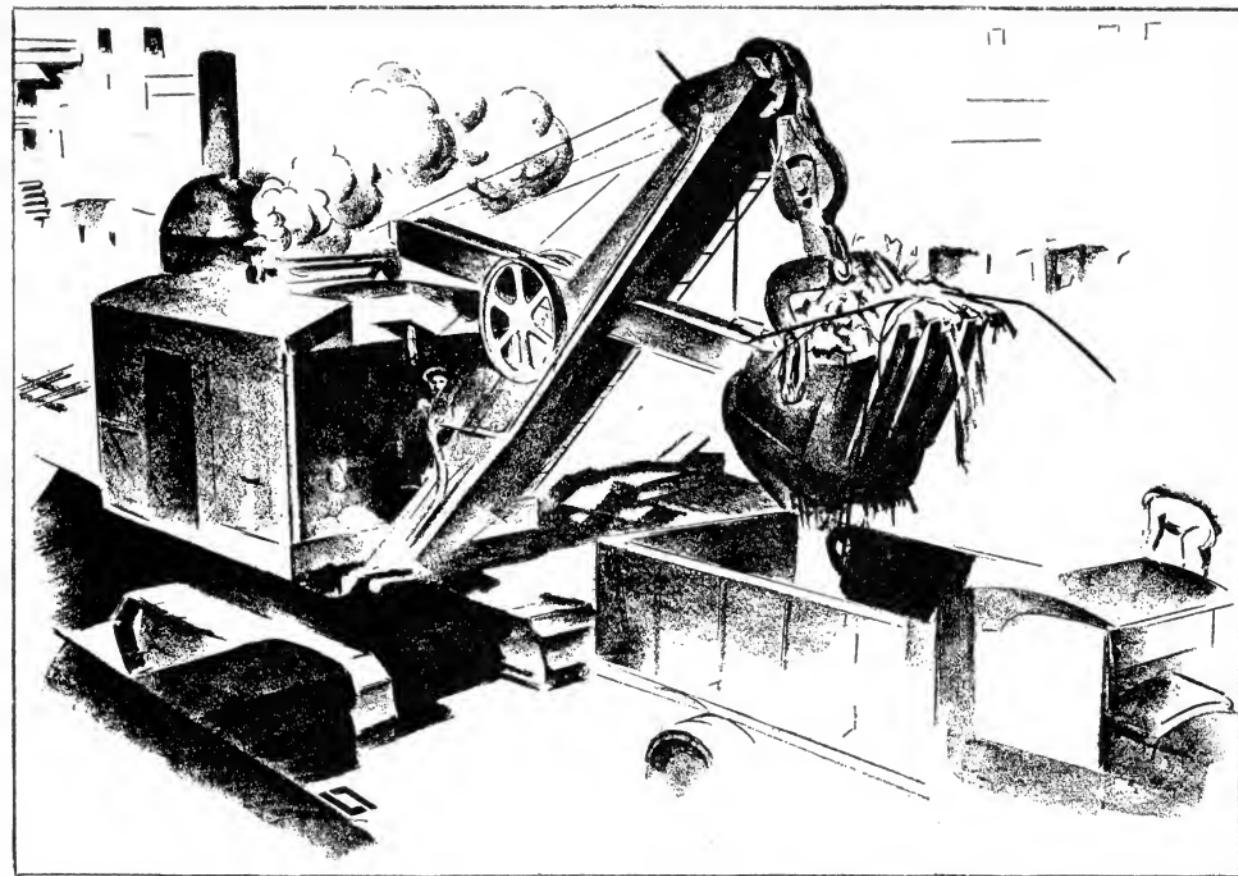
*And you, who strolling with your cigarette
Between two classes, thus have chanced to see
This product of your world, will you forget?
Or will you some day, when you have to choose
Between your profits and the lives of men,
Recall a putrid bundle, gapping shoes,
Staining the sweet young grass, and then
Consider which of you has most to lose?*

KENNETH W. PORTER



STEAMSHOVEL

LOUIS LOZOWICK '30
Louis Lozowick



STEAMSHOVEL

LOUIS LOZOWICK '30
Louis Lozowick

Conductor 1377

By HERMAN SPECTOR

The traction company was advertising for men, thirty-five cents an hour, motormen and conductors. On account of my bad sight I picked a spot as conductor, because they wouldn't take a motorman who wore glasses. I got my slip OK'd, paid 1.65 for a badge, and was shipped up to the doctor's office. He passed me. I went back to the office, signed up to buy a uniform at the regulation comm. store, which happened to be Browning & King, well known clothiers for the elite; signed the other articles which said I was a member of the Brotherhood; then I went back to the park-bench. I had a job.

The next day I plunked down 22.50 for a swell new suit, and a nice braided cap, and reported back to the Instruction Department. Here they were going to teach me how to be a conductor, and they didn't charge me anything either. It was all free. This company didn't care damn about expense, so long as things were done right.

The instructor was a beefy, redheaded guy who acted like a real pal. He was very encouraging. The first thing he taught us was how to count, so we wouldn't never mix the company's money with our own. If we did, that was just too bad for us. He proved that in black and white. He showed us how the clock worked, and explained that if we would ever have any doubt about how many fares to ring up, we should always ring up a few extra, just to be on the safe side. All in all, he acted like a real pal.

Well, we all passed with AAA marks from this guy, or at least we all passed. We had our theories down pat, but were yet to put them into practice. The next grade was held in a real trolley-car down in the barns, under the tuition of a comical old boy who reminded me of Emil Jannings playing the After part in those Before and After dramas. This guy didn't like me. I laughed at his jokes, but I laughed too long, not giving him hardly enough time to get off another one. Finally he glowered over at me until I thought maybe he wouldn't pass me, and me with 22.50 plus 1.65 in the pot, so I shut up for a while. He was really such a comical guy, with a walrus moustache, bullet head, built like a mack truck especially the bulldog waddle he had. He was an honorary member of every cops and detectives organization in the city. He thought all jews were lawyers.

When we had got OK'd by this punk, we were still goofs, you understand. We had to work-out for a week or so at the company's own expense, no extra charge, alongside the horny-handed veterans. They usually picked guys with a few stripes for this duty, trusted members of the Brotherhood, and paid them fifty cents extra a day—big money. The guy I was working with the first day had a bad habit of trying to push me out of the car when I didn't lean out far enough to please him. I had to call him down for it, and that got him disgusted with me, so he did all the work himself, and wouldn't even talk to me. I wasn't sore. In fact, I was sociable. I offered to collect the nickels while he looked after the passengers getting on and off, but I could see he didn't trust me. Well, he signed my card as OK for the day, and I felt a little happier.

The next day I thought sure I was capable to be a conductor. I knew about counting scores, waiting for the green light, seeing that no passengers were unavoidably killed, and how to be polite though firm. "Step right up in the car!", I shouted. It was a grand job, even if I hadn't collected a cent on it yet.

Around about the third day I was doing things for myself, I had sort of got the rift, but wasn't getting paid for it. It was disgusting. Here I was getting up out of the hay at four-thirty



CHRISTMAS DINNER, 1930

William Gropper

a. m., out on the rails at five-fifteen, sweating myself silly for at least ten hours, counting up the boss' money at the end of the day on my own time, and nary a one of them nickels found its way to my pocket. It was fierce, and some of the guys had to give it up, and tried to sell their uniforms second-hand to new men or such, but found mighty few buyers.

When about a week had passed in this wise, more or less, and I was about thinking maybe I ought to apply for a job as instructor, they put me on the payroll, with many buts and how-overs. That is, I was an extra man, I had to hang around the barns from godknowswhen in the morning to whocares at night, and maybe, if somebody got sick or something terrible happened, they would call me for two or three hours work, perhaps, thirty-five cents an hour. So I did that little thing for them. During the time we were waiting to be called, we were told to cling close to the company restaurant run exclusively by the Brotherhood, of which we were all members. Here we were allowed to buy soggy doughnuts and drink some kind of stuff out of chipped cups which stunk like rats. I didn't think I could stomach that kind of stuff, but you'd be surprised what waiting around in a carbarn all day long will do to a guy. I even ordered meat-dishes in that dive, and now I can understand what happened to the old trusty nags when they scrapped the horsecars. But the carbarns were a great educational center.





THEATRE

"Roar China" and the Critics

Roar China is a story of patient and exploited Chinese workers no longer able to bear the tortures of the white man's oppression, changing suddenly into an elemental, all-devastating revolutionary proletariat. It is a powerful, dynamic dramatization of the struggle against imperialism. When it was first produced by Meyerhold in Moscow, in 1926, the response of the Soviet workers and peasants was enthusiastic.

"I see the play for the first time," writes Budenny, peasant leader of the Red Army, "the action is extraordinarily fast, it carries you away to the actual scene of China. I forget myself, and feel tempted to join the actors and participate in the struggle"

And workers and peasants, become equally enthusiastic. For when a new play is presented in "Collective Russia," often a nation-wide discussion follows and the bearded peasants from the village, the worker from the factory and the intellectual at his writing-table, each one hastens to express his opinion on the subject.

It is quite different in our "individualistic" America. Here the dramatic critic is the barometer of sentiment in a well-defined, institutionalized and disciplined group.

Mr. Robert Littell writing about *Elizabeth, the Queen*, in the *New York World* reaches the heights of objectivity. He believes that, "If ever there was material for a historical play in the grand style, it is in the fortunes of Essex and his Queen, in that curious battle between Love and Ambition. . . ."

But, when writing about *Roar China* in the *World* of November 3rd, Mr. Littell misplaces his objectivity.

"Not that *Roar China* is a good play," he writes. "Far from it. It is a thick, raw, bleeding chunk of excruciating distortion and propaganda. . . . It is unpleasant to have such a brutal caricature presented to audiences only too ready to believe the worst of the Step-mother Country. Let it pass, because while *Roar China* does not convince me that anything resembling its incidents really happened in Wan Hsien in 1926. . . ."

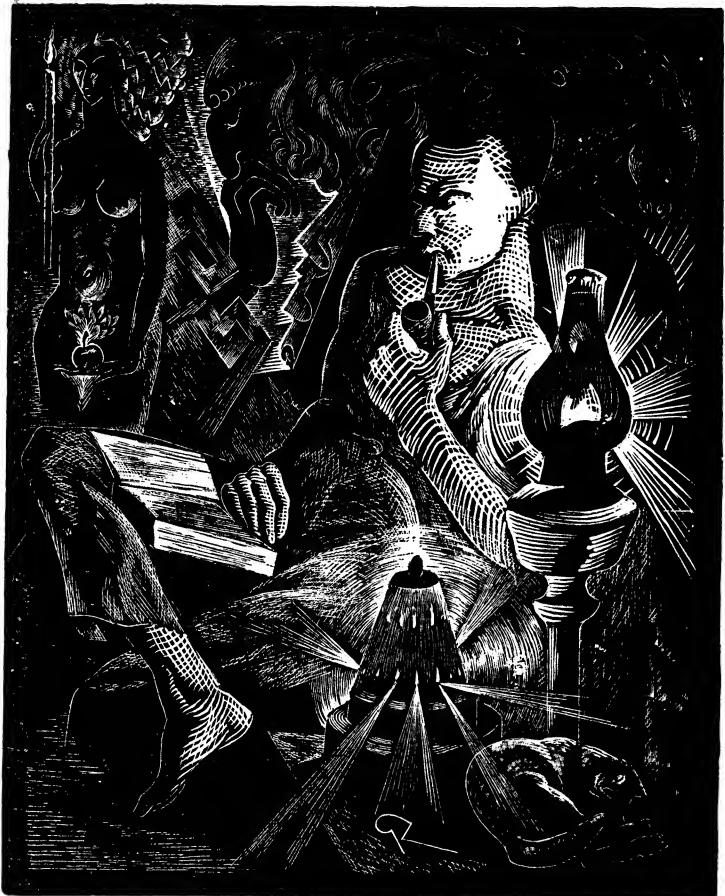
Even the liberals who never miss an opportunity to publicly shed crocodile tears over the fate of nations oppressed by imperialism, saw in this play the mysterious hand of Moscow, and became alarmed.

"Tretyakov's indictment of imperialism," writes John Mason Brown in the *Nation* of November 12, "finds expression in a flaming, wrathful melodrama that glories—as the frankly propagandist piece it is—in all the purposeful distortions which have belonged to effective propaganda from the days of Harriet Beecher Stowe. . . . For what is far more important than whether you happen to agree with the preaching of Tretyakov, or enraged by the squint-eyed partisanship of his propaganda is the fact that the Russian audiences were both willing and anxious to read reality into his caricature."

And every critic in New York echoed, almost parrot like, the same profound sentiments. One would think that critics never heard of the notorious Canton and Shanghai massacres, and the bombardment of the defenseless town of Wan Hsien by the British gunboat "Cockchafer." Incidentally, "Cockchafer" is the name of the gunboat in the original Russian, changed by the Theatre Guild into "H. M. S. Europa."

Tretyakov's presentation of the whites in China, the critics sing in chorus, is a "brutal caricature." It is the Theatre Guild however, that has added the caricature to the realistic character of Tretyakov. Not to make the picture of imperialism at work in China too black, they felt they had to add at least one Christian soul to soften the grim aspect of reality. So, Tretyakov's realistic Cordelia, the daughter of a merchant, a typical flapper, whose only worry is the acquisition of Chinese kimonos, who runs to snap a photo of the Chinese bell-boy who hanged himself from the mast of the ship as a sign of protest, becomes on the stage of the Theatre Guild, the pure and Christian little Cordelia.

Even the speech of the Chinese radio-operator, the secret propagandist from Canton, told so realistically by Tretyakov and which is in fact the climax of the play, is shortened and softened by the Guild. And when the wife of the innocent coolie who was murdered by the British as a substitute for the supposed criminal who escaped, tries to inspire her little son with the spirit of



BOOKS

Gan Kolski

revenge: "Grow fast," she tells him, "even twenty years from now, if this murderer is dead, avenge yourself upon his son;" and when one of the Chinese boatmen suggests that twenty years from now the son of the British captain will be shooting down her son with cannons, the secret propagandist from Canton exclaims in the original: "Twenty years from now her son will be master, trampling under his feet the son of the Englishman!" But, on the stage of the Theatre Guild, he repeats the meaningless, Kellogg-Peace-Pact phrase: "Twenty years from now, there will be no cannons!"

Roar China, like the whole Soviet theatre, is exciting and intriguing. And it retains its qualities even in the Theatre Guild version. The acting of the untrained Chinese cast is superb. They are part and parcel of the play. Every mispronounced English word only carries added conviction. The black-outs of the curtainless stage, the sampans, and the British destroyer swaying majestically on real waters have never been seen before on the American stage.

But all that our critics can see in *Roar China* is red. They see propaganda, and they become counter-propagandists.

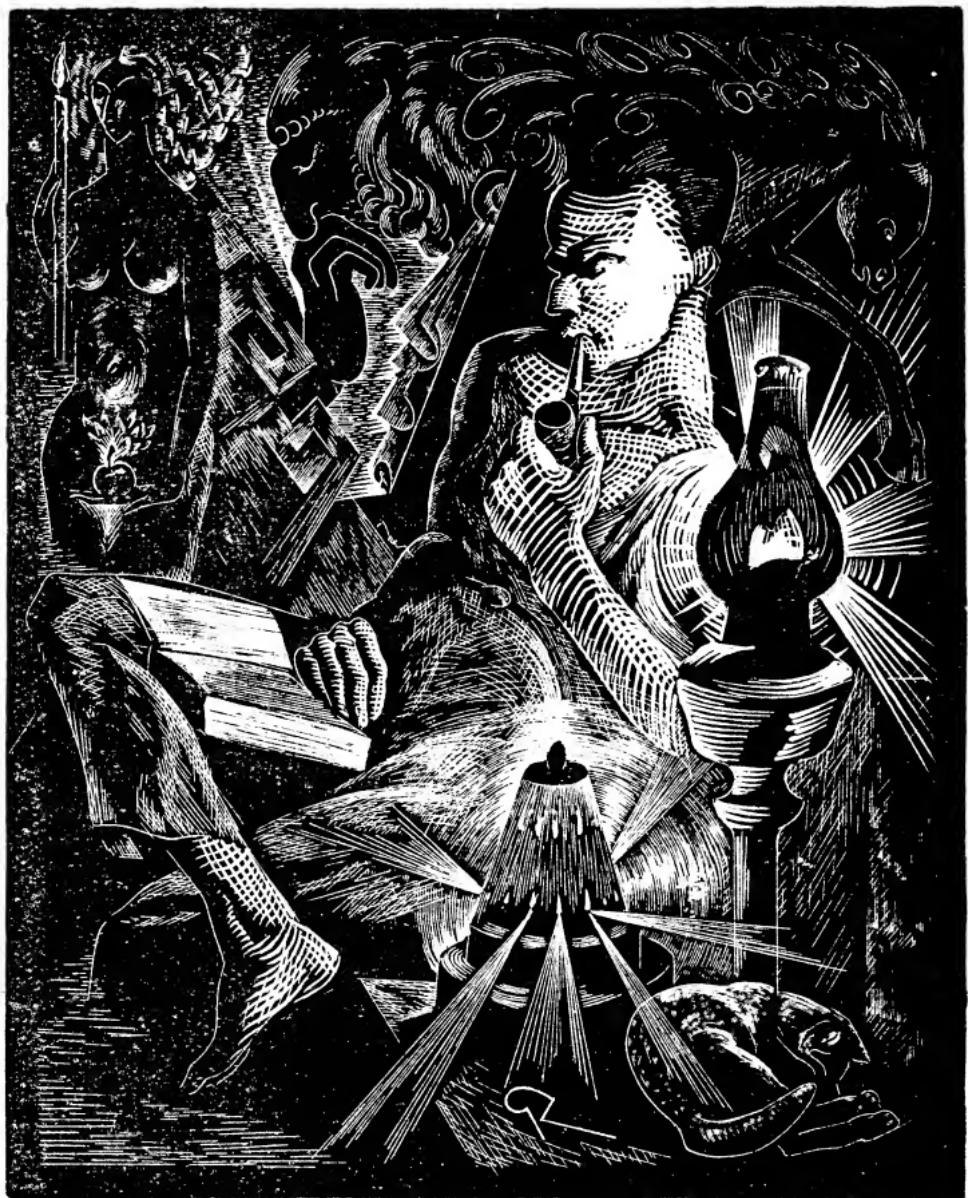
LEON DENNEN

●

Forgery In Christianity, by Joseph Wheless. A. Knopf, \$4.00.

Wheless' book although welcome enough to radicals as another smashing annihilation of bible mythology (of which there cannot be too many to counteract the active campaigns of highly endowed bible societies) is yet open to serious criticism. It is sententious and repetitious and has all the limitations of the literature of the "rationalists" whose knowledge of intellectual history seems to cease with Thomas Paine. It offers as an antidote to religion merely a vague "appeal to reason" instead of fostering an aggressive, candidly materialistic program free from all spiritualistic implications such as that adopted by the Soviet Union. Religion is something more than a mass of forgeries; it is an attitude of mind that deadens inquiry, encourages compromise and submission to exploitation and fosters a non-combative psychology that casts religious people into the camp of counter revolution. The church must be assailed in the light of the role that it has played as an agent of the ruling groups to enslave the masses. Bible smashing is a trivial game when one considers the need of an exposure of the crimes of the church in action.

BENNETT STEVENS





BOOKS

Reviewed by

Robert Dunn, Melvin P. Levy, Charles Yale Harrison, James T. Farrell, Bennett Stevens

Some Folks Won't Work, by Clinch Calkins, Harcourt, Brace & Co., \$1.50

Here is a story book about the glorious, free and independent American worker, the sturdy self-reliant figure of the Hoover-Green imagination. He has no "dole" to "demoralize" him, no social insurance to "pamper" him. He is the shiny, bronzed, muscular fellow you see in cigarette and shaving soap ads.

Take a look at him in a period of *normal* unemployment before the industrial boat began to spring a leak last year. The social settlement worker who writes this book tells us her data have nothing to do with recent depression months when dollar-a-year Harvard ex-police chiefs and committees of One Hundred have been sticking their finger into the holes in the dike. It all happened in the forgotten era of blah-blah prosperity.

John Doe—and in 1930, some 8 or 9 million like him—is out of a job. He is alas, in "honest difficulties." He wants to work. He is competent, able-bodied, not "maladjusted," and doesn't touch liquor. But nothing doing. There are no jobs. And the family case work interviews of the social workers in some 30 cities of this god-blessed country report the harrowing details which Miss Calkins has summarized in this book: "insufficient food; undernourished; lack of milk; baby died; lack of resistance; mother thin; father underfed; incipient tuberculosis; bad teeth; rickets." And many suicides and unmistakable deaths from starvation.

The intimate, detailed stories of the tortured unemployed deal largely with skilled and semi-skilled workers, those that have lost jobs through new machinery, trade shifts, market changes, mergers, the rise of chain stores, "over-production." There are also those out of work because of "cyclical depression," "seasonal slackness" and all the other causes that have nothing to do with a worker's morals, skill, physical strength or church attendance.

Like all writers of the *Survey*-charity school Miss Calkins uses somewhat over-embroidered language. The family history of a poor plumber's helper is a "saga," you know. This, perhaps, makes the terrible story a little more endurable to the parasite reader.

These accounts of misery, starvation, sickness and despair in workers' homes, and the crumbs of charity scattered to "relieve" the victims, should be contrasted with workers' conditions in the Soviet Union. There a complete system of social insurance gives full protection to the workers and their families in every phase of life. Such pictures as this book contains remain only as memories of the days of tsarism and capitalism.

We can scarcely expect Miss Calkins or any social worker to suggest such improvements as have come to the workers through a revolution! For social workers are institutionalized, yes, ladies, bred by capitalism for the special purpose of keeping industrial workers "adjusted" to their slave environment. They are essentially sob sisters. Many of them, like Helen Hall, who contributes the last chapter of the book, dealing with the Detroit jobless last winter, drive Buicks. They like to be appointed to sit with business men on Hoover committees to help industry solve its problems without "government interference." Miss Calkins does suggest, very mildly, that the private gypo employment agencies are not all that they should be. She praises the "regularization" efforts of a few "good" employers. Public works and similar measures are regarded as helping the situation. It is even suggested that some form of insurance, to which, of course, the workers would contribute, might be useful. Social reformers, and their financial backers, are more and more coming to regard partial measures of social insurance as a good way to stop demonstrations of the unemployed and the propaganda of the Communists.

But Miss Calkins is not concerned primarily with remedies. She is only trying to impress the callous souls of the middle and upper classes with the fact that unemployment is a permanent phenom-

on of normal times, that the jobless are honest and worthy people, and that men who want work can't find it no matter how hard they try. At this she has done a good job. But she clings firmly to the illusion that the growing plague of unemployment can be cured under capitalism.

ROBERT DUNN

Bullets and Coal

The Devil's Brigade, by John L. Spivak. Brewer and Warren. \$3.50

The story of the Hatfield-McCoy feud is apparently pretty much a microcosmic history of the development of capitalism and the class-struggle out of feudalism—complicated, however, by a fine case of modern political corruption which reached like an inverted anachronism down into the feudalistic period. It is a pity that John Spivak has not more fully realized the implications of his material. The first three-quarters of his book are as thrilling as a western movie—and on precisely the same level. We see drawing Southern mountaineers (whose most intimate conversations have been captured by this biographer), drinking gallons of whiskey, falling into the most passionate love (to which, however, they cannot be faithful), shooting at each other from behind ambush with long squirrel rifles or fighting breath taking battles-between-giants, and living under a system whose core is the clan but which includes the whole countryside, and enforces the most stringent loyalty to a name or individual.

After all it is not terribly interesting to know that Jone Hatfield met Rosanna McCoy and, though there was hatred between the two families, loved her. That story I am informed, (for I have never been able to read the play) has been told superlatively by Mr. Shakespeare. And it is told again passably enough in every book, theatre and motion picture season. It is interesting, however, to know that two clan leaders could each call out whole armed counties to fight their private wars, and, naturally elect governors and sheriffs on the basis of their willingness to support them. It would be even more interesting to know the background of this condition. It is plain that it was not mere romantic love of fighting; there were Hatfields and McCoys who tired of the fight and even some who, at times, withdrew from it. We can infer that the citizenry was not only emotionally, but also economically dependent on the clan leaders; and that excommunication was therefore, a real force. But it was possible to infer that much from a movie called *A Man's Man* that I once saw.

But the last chapters of *The Devil's Brigade* take fire. The clans and the agrarian community have given way to coal fields and industrialism. "Sons of coal owning feudists went to colleges and universities, while sons of feudists who had no coal lands were born to the pick and shovel and the dark entrails of the earth." The clan lines are erased and class-lines take place. Attempts are made to organize. In the old days it was possible for the Hatfields and the McCoys each to have a governor. But now all the governors are owned by one group who, oddly enough, also own the coal mines. The old governors were "powerless" to interfere between the two chiefs. A new governor can order a group of mine workers to disperse and add, with considerable frankness: "I shall call troops and you'll have the government to fight."

The last chapters contain the story of the Logan County organization struggle, told, not in terms of individuals loving and killing each other, but of its background and cause. This is a *real* feud. You ought to get hold of this book: you can read or skip the first section, as you like. The last part is moving, powerful and important. Someone ought to make a pamphlet out of it.

MELVIN P. LEVY

A Poet Writes of War

Memoirs of an Infantry Officer. By Siegfried Sassoon. Coward-McCann. \$2.50

Siegfried Sassoon, author of those excellent volumes of war verse, *Counterattack* and *Collected War Poems*, in this novel gives us what is undoubtedly the finest of the English war books. It is bitter without being hysterical and beautiful without being mawkish. Its prose is flawless; a delight to read.

The traditional attitude of the gallant British gentleman's attitude to privates and the war, is fortunately lacking here. Disgust with the hereditary English military stupidity is set forth with admirable power and restraint.

It is obviously autobiography. Even the author's letter of refusal to return to the Western Front after a leave of absence is included in the book. At the height of the war hysteria in 1917, this act by Mr. Sassoon required more than ordinary courage.

The letter reads:

"I am making this act of willful defiance of military authority, because I believe that the war is being deliberately prolonged by those who have the power to end it. I am a soldier, convinced that I am acting on behalf of soldiers. I believe that this war, upon which I entered as a war of defense and liberation, has now become a war of aggression and conquest. . . . I have seen and endured the suffering of the troops, and I can no longer be a party to prolong these sufferings for ends which I believe to be evil and unjust. I am protesting. . . . against the deception which is being practised. . . . also I believe that I may help to destroy the callous complacency with which the majority of those at home regard the continuance of agonies which they do not share, and which they have not sufficient imagination to realize."

In his autobiography *Goodby To All That*, Robert Graves tells how he "saved" Sassoon from execution or imprisonment by pleading that the youthful poet was insane because of his harrowing war experiences. Sassoon makes no mention of the insanity plea in this his war book.

CHARLES YALE HARRISON

A Future "Y" Secretary

Our President Hoover, by William J. Marsh, Jr., New Milford Connecticut. William J. & Chas. March, publishers, printed by Doubleday & Doran, Inc. \$1.00.

The author of this useless book is an eleven year old from a comfortable, bourgeois home in New Milford, Connecticut; he wrote, set-up, and printed sixty copies of this book on his own press. Enterprising reporters, hired to feed the child-minded, picked up the story, and flashed it in the nation's press. Enterprising publishers, contracted to produce the volume according to mass production methods, and a press syndicate began parcelling out its contents in weekly installments. Now the book is a best seller.

Fundamentally, the boy's impulse was creative, and as such a laudable aberration from the norms of young America. But society is the ultimate source of standards and values, and in this function, society pours the attitudes and materials into the consciousness of a creative worker. All that American society, refracted through New Milford, Connecticut, could do with a boy's aesthetic intentions was to fill them with stale, shabby, downright vicious propaganda about the flag, the ballooned reputation of another presidential failure, the goodness of all things Christian, middle-class, Republican, and American. The public schools, the bombast of radio speakers, and presidential campaigners, the Congressional Church, the Boy Scouts and the Y.M.C.A., the insincere ejections of newspapers, editors, and home town gossip have all formed and promoted this infantile eulogy of high-collared Herbert. Aping his elders, the boy found ready responses; his book has been promoted by large scale publicity methods; now, social resources and energy are applied to wasteful and childish pursuits while the country groans beneath economic depression and a developing class struggle. What little individuality and integrity the boy might have wrenched from New Milford Connecticut have now been degraded. The boy has been formed into a disgusting stereotype. When he reaches eighteen, he'll probably become a Y secretary; and now, while in his teens, he'll receive the honor of shaking the perspiring paw of the great man himself.

Too bad infants cannot vote!

JAMES T. FARRELL



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MOVIES

By HARRY ALAN POTAMKIN

Soil, produced by Wufku, presented at the Eighth Street Playhouse, New York:

The director of *Arsenal*, that splendid effort toward a symbolic structure and a new logic of the motion picture, enters with *Soil* farther into the intensification of the film as the instrument of an idea. Here is a picture which, as a sustained attitude of a lyrical artist, is singular in its beauty. The sensibility for light-tones and for timing, a sensibility as accurate as a metronome, and an intensity of composition, in which mobile and immobile images collect into a song of death and birth, "old and new," create an experience of poignant plaintiveness. It is, as such, a thing perfect and exquisite.

And that is its failure. It extends the message of collectivism farther into the province of the reflective, whither the film the world over must inherently progress. But in moving to the reflective, it becomes too personal a meditation, it becomes introspective where it should be prospective. There is optimism here, certainly, and there is a statement of inevitable victory of life over death, the new over the old, the future over the past. The development of the process of the Soviet kino presents less Dickensian portraits of the enemies of society, they are more subtilized than those in Eisenstein's last film. But *Soil* has refined the sardonic too much, the irony is delicate and not provocative enough. Indeed, the entire film has a poignancy too plaintive for the intention and sense of its theme. It is not persuasive of man's will. It is a cathartic that purges one of active belief. A sense of "Earth takes—earth gives" remains. Condemnation is balanced by assuage, and the rain on the fruit washes away any residue of assertion. *Soil* is not what it should be, what the material theme demands of the aesthetic treatment, a stimulant to action. It is almost a reduction of a tremendous social material to a personal song, an elegy. It is too elegaic, although it is a surpassingly beautiful elegy.

Soil attests to the diversity of methods that will grow out of the Soviet kino having their roots in one soil: the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. It attests to the fact of the fecundity of the Soviet film, of its continuous evolution, a process that has developed from an appeal directed at the visceral to an appeal reaching the higher nerve centers. It attests to the fact that "propaganda" in the Soviet film coincides with this climactic progression, and becomes a more attenuated, more suggestive thing, bringing its message to an apex. Dovzhenko proves that the most physical of activities, a thrashing machine in action, may be treated within a film contemplative and lyric, and become a temperament as well as a mechanism. Dovzhenko's failure is the failure of a singer who has chosen the wrong pitch. His success is the control of that pitch. To the art of the cinema, he contributes, as representative of the Soviet film, in the vanguard of the world's motion picture, further instruction in the use of realities as symbols in performance as an element of composition, in textures as emotion, in resonance or suggestion, in the true language of the film. *Soil* is the peak of the mute film, but it may also well serve the valid speech-film as a base. Where the intensification of the silent film concludes, that of the talking film begins.

HARRY ALAN POTAMKIN

Billy the kid, an M-G-M production, Capitol Theatre, New York.

Billy the Kid was an emotional moron who played the role of the gun-ready racketeer in the frontier era of economic warfare. Legends of the Robin Hood and Jesse James "he did it for the poor" brand never developed around him. He shot twenty-odd men, "not counting Mexicans and Indians," and omitting, I suppose, the ranch foreman who was "only a Jew." Billy the Kid is the high-water mark of the economic desperado unrefined. In the more refined sphere he has numerous counterparts in contemporary society.

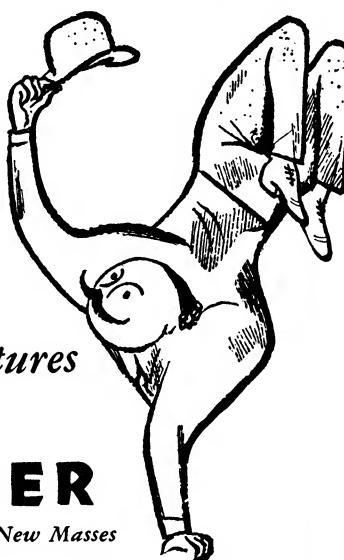
It was inevitable that a film be made of this out-and-out murderer. King Vidor, that overvalued director, made the film. It is just another western of "the good bad man" who goes good for a girl, a theme and treatment which dates from the first *Broncho Billy*. *Billy The Kid* is another stereotype.

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2. Organization of a Proletcult Centre.
3. Election of the necessary functionaries.

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L. A. DESANTES

New York, N. Y.

Workers Dramatic Council

German Revolutionary Theatre

Editors of New Masses:

On Friday, October 24, the Proletbuhne, German revolutionary workers theatre group of New York, opened its fifth season of activity with a Revue, *Fest der Neuen Massen*, attended by about 700 workers and their families at the Yorkville Casino.

Most of those attending were newcomers, attracted to the affair thru poster displays and ticket sales directly in the streets.

The program was built of a Revue, specially made lantern slides in caricature with accompanying monologue (very popular), and a mass recitation *Vote Communist!*, written by Hans Bohn, and led by 65 workers seated thruout the audience and in all parts of the hall. Max Bedacht, of the Communist Party, was speaker.

Art exhibits of books, posters, photographs from the German pictorial A.I.Z. and of original drawings by *New Masses* artists, attracted a great deal of attention following the performance.

Special display tables were arranged featuring the literature and soliciting membership for the International Labor Defense, Workers International Relief, and other organizations and subscriptions for the German weekly *Der Arbeiter*.

The Proletbuhne will sponsor affairs thruout the winter. The *Fest Der Neuen Massen* was repeated in Brooklyn on November first, in Philadelphia on the 15th and will be shown at a number of neighboring cities in the next five weeks.

All these activities are done by an active membership of only 18, directed by an executive board of three, including: Hans Bohn, Hallwei and the secretary, Graetel Haller, to whom all communications can be directed to 381 East 81 St., New York City.

W.I.R. Cultural Center

New Masses:

English speaking workers cultural activities in New York have never been in such an advantageous position for permanency, growth and artistic development as they are now with the decision of the W. I. R. to take English speaking cultural groups under its direct guidance.

The Workers Laboratory Theatre, is now part of the Cultural Dept. of the W. I. R. and is to be the basis for the establishment of a permanent Workers Theatre of the Revolution which will organize, supply plays, train "Blue Blouse" groups, etc. The W. I. R. will henceforth be the experimental theatre of the W. I. R. where workers will seek to develop new dramatic and technical



A new photo of the Berlin agitprop group *Kolonne Links* (Columns Left) presenting a satirical sketch of the German film censors at work on the Soviet movie, *Storm Over Asia*. This group and others in the Workers Theatre Movement, present sketches, reviews and satirical burlesques on timely subjects in the "cabaret style" as described by Tom Thomas in the November issue of the *New Masses* in his article on the International Conference of Revolutionary Workers Theatre Groups recently held in Moscow.

art forms best suited to the requirements of the revolutionary proletariat. This new activity has attracted a number of writers, actors and artists with considerable theatrical experience.

Also under the W. I. R. banner, are the Red Dancers, W. I. R. Brass Band, Camera Club, School of Dance & Music, with its various classes in the Bronx, Yorkville and Brooklyn. A symphony orchestra and the first English Mass Chorus are also in process of organization.

The new W. I. R. headquarters at 131 W. 28th St., will have an experimental theatre seating about 150 workers, three sound proof music rooms, projection room, film and camera room, dressing room and storage rooms for costumes, props, etc.

Workers interested in any of these cultural activities can get all the necessary information by addressing *BEATRICE CARLIN, Sec'y Local Workers Int'l Relief, 10 E. 17 St., N. Y. C., phone Gramercy 2862*.

More on Soviet Blue Blouse

Editors of New Masses:

Some further information about the Blue Blouse might be of interest to your readers.

The first Blue Blouse group began its work in a spontaneous, dramatic manner. When Lenin died, a few journalists in Moscow felt that they had to expose their grief in some way. They put on blue blouses and recited their feelings towards their dead leader.

The idea and method of the Blue Blouse, to dramatize current events with little scenery or decorations and to produce short skits with plenty of political humor, spread like wild-fire. Only three years after its inception there were already seven professional and seven thousand amateur groups. A visit was made to Germany and the idea of the Blue Blouse captured the imagination of the German workers. All gatherings of the left-wing organizations in Germany are now enlivened by performances of some amateur Blue Blouse groups. Now practically every European country has such groups. When will America and other countries make use of this very effective propaganda method?

The Blue Blouse has organized an International Bureau which is anxious to have connections and to exchange ideas, plays, information, etc. with workers dramatic groups in all countries. The address is:

Blue Blouse, Stoleshnikov Pereoluk 3, Moscow, U S S R,

Comradely,

HARRY JAFFE

Moscow, U S S R.



A new photo of the Berlin agitprop group *Kolonne Links* (Columns Left) presenting a satirical sketch of the German film censors at work on the Soviet movie, *Storm Over Asia*. This group and others in the Workers Theatre Movement, present sketches, reviews and satirical burlesques on timely subjects in the "cabaret style" as described by Tom Thomas in the November issue of the *New Masses* in his article on the International Conference of Revolutionary Workers Theatre Groups recently held in Moscow.

What Should Revolutionary Artists Do Now?

Editors of *New Masses*:

The letter of Jessup in the October *Masses* raises two points which should be met frankly by revolutionary artists and writers.

1. Gold, Freeman, Dos Passos, Harrison, Peters, Gellert, Gropper, Klein, Siegel, Dehn, Young and others go to capitalist publications and galleries with the same regularity (and uncertainty) as workers go to shops and factories—and for the same reasons. One might ask a revolutionary artist to refuse all collaboration with capitalist institutions and starve to death with his revolutionary conscience immaculate. Or one might ask him to contribute his share to the revolutionary movement with whatever means at his command while conceding the inevitability (as we do in the case of a factory worker) of his working in capitalist institutions. However, since art embodies an ideology, the difficulty is how far the artist can travel without compromising his revolutionary convictions. The point is delicate but with the class standpoint in mind not beyond determination. To illustrate: we should condemn a drawing attacking the Chinese revolution but not one illustrating the working of an aeroplane.

2. Revolutionary caricature is an excellent weapon in the fight on capitalism. In its annihilating attack on the weaknesses of the worker's enemies caricature is mainly negative. Should the revolutionary artist confine himself to this negative phase alone or is there also a positive phase in the worker, his environment and all those aspects of contemporary life in which the revolutionary standpoint is more implicit than obvious? Should the artist register in his work those aspects and make a lasting contribution (assuming him sufficiently gifted) to what is now perhaps vaguely called proletarian culture? Or shall we assume that the vast literature on proletarian culture is so much waste paper? Leading revolutionary thinkers, Marx, Engels, Mehring, Plechanov, Lenin, Lunacharsky, have shown the necessary connection between art and society, and the importance of culture (and not caricature alone) for the revolution. In the days of deepest famine and civil war the Bolsheviks made every effort to preserve old art and encourage the new. Shall we say that these revolutionaries in action and those other revolutionaries in theory have been wrong and that the uninformed if zealous are right when they say: these are no days for "art"? To ask the question is to answer it.

New York, N. Y.

LOUIS LOZOWICK

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Not So Hot, But—

What I do not like about the *New Masses* is the affectation of idealized proletarianism, the monotonous strumming on the hardboiled string, the hostility to ideas on other levels than the one, the contempt for modulated writing and criticism, the evasion of discussion, etc. But one must make the most of what lies to hand—and hence I want to help a little in propagating this one organ of uncompromising protest. I like practically all of the pictures and articles by Dos Passos, Mary Vorse, etc.—*Newton Arvin, Northampton, Conn.*

A Little Highbrow—

Cut out those highbrow articles on Humanism and other intellectual junk. Why not simple biographies of Lenin and other revolutionary leaders? I think Klein, Dehn, Gropper are great. Gold's memoirs the best the magazine has had. The magazine has improved.—*B. P. Beckwith, Los Angeles, Calif.*

Free Verse Awful—

Can't you get a Marxian Eddie Guest or a new Joe Hill? Or fill up your poetry space in each issue by repeating "You're Indispensable" and "Bum, Bum, Bum!" the poems you printed sometime ago. Your prose and pictures are excellent; your free verse awful.—*R. C. Ainslee, Englewood, Colo.*

Let's Have a Little Self-Criticism—

I think our comrades on the *New Masses* should come a little closer to the revolutionary movement. A little more attention and participation in our everyday struggles. Let's have a little self-criticism on this point. I like Lozowick, Siegel, Notes of the Month and your letters from readers.—*M. Oholian, New York City.*

Cut Out Movies & Workers Art—

I do not like your movie reviews or Workers Art Section. Why not put out the last as a mimeographed supplement? I like Lozowick, Dehn, Dos Passos. What happened to Otto Soglow and H. H. Lewis?—*Louis Boiseclair, Leesburg, Fla.*

From A Soldier—

Cut your book section in half. Give us more on the class struggle . . . more on the situations in China and India. I like Gropper: he rubs it in. Gold fine, Dos Passos swell. I'm still in the hospital since the last war—and they're already preparing another, against the Soviet Union. This time I'll know better.—*Leo. S. Poling, Los Angeles, Calif.*

From A Hack Driver—

I have been unemployed for months but am getting a hack license now and may soon be shuffling prostitutes and bankers about the Island. If I prosper, I'll join the New Masses Sustaining Fund. Your need for funds has me worried. To discontinue the magazine would be a genuine loss.—*C. Robbins, New York City.*

Hear Ye, Fiction Writers—

I've lost the Green Blank but I'm sending a little. I wish it were more but the till is empty. I think the *New Masses* has improved and should have a great future in the leadership of the Youth especially. I wish there were more proletarian fiction—more shame to me and others of your fiction writers that there isn't. Send me more blanks anyway—I'm going after some new subs.—*Mary Heaton Vorse, Provincetown, Mass.*

Poor Doc, Nobody Wants His Life Or His Verses—

I like the John Reed number. Here's money, send me more. The only thing is, what the hell? I feel in a false position. How can I be a Communist, being what I am. Poetry is the thing which has the hardest hold on me in my daily experiences. But I cannot, without an impossible wrench of my understanding, turn it into a force directed toward one end, Vote the Communist Ticket, or work for the world revolution. There are too many difficulties, unresolved difficulties in my way. I can however see the monumental blockwit of social injustices surrounding me on every side. But why they arise, God only knows. But in any case they are there and I would give my life freely if I could right them. But who the hell wants my life? Nobody as far as I can see. They don't even want my verse, which is of more importance. I'm for you. I'll help as I can. I'd like to see you live. And here's to the light, from wherever it may come. Yours, *William Carlos Williams, Rutherford, N. J.*

From A 22 Calibre Capitalist—

I have read the old *Masses* and the *New Masses* for several years. I think the magazine has improved. I am only a 22 calibre capitalist, 67 years old and it looks like the present period of unemployment will make a proletarian out of me yet. I think and think but what's the use. Meanwhile here's a little for *New Masses*; I like it—*Dr. J. L. Higbee, Jenera, Ohio.*

Louis Lozowick—is contributing editor of *New Masses*.

Herman Spector—is working in a furniture warehouse in New York.

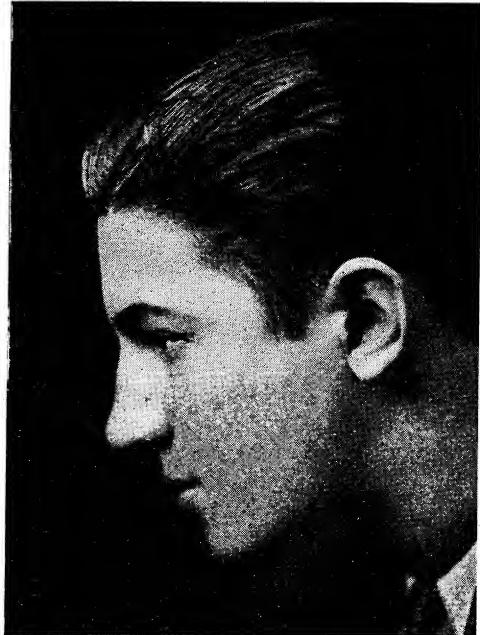
William Gropper—now in Soviet Russia, is author of *Alay Oop* a satirical novel in drawings just off the press.

Robert Dunn—is head of the Labor Research Association.

Gan Kolski—Polish artist, contributor to the magazines, is exhibiting at various New York galleries.

Charles Yale Harrison—author of *Generals Die in Bed*, is completing his second novel, *A Child Is Born*, to be published early in March.

James T. Farrell—of Chicago, contributor to the magazines, makes his first appearance in *New Masses*.



Phil Bard—was born on the East Side of New York, February 13, 1912. His first cartoons in print appeared in the *New Masses* early this year. He is a frequent contributor to the *Daily Worker*, *Labor Unity* and other publications. He writes of himself: "I have worked as errand boy, shipping clerk, cartoon animator for Krazy Kat Studios and as commercial artist. I am now attending the New York Evening School of Industrial Art studying water-color painting. I spend my days studying the Want Ad sheets for a job. I have learned in my few years of life that the more I know about painting the less I seem to know about getting regular meals. And I have a healthy, normal appetite."

In This Issue

NOTES OF THE MONTH—for this issue are written by *Manuel Gomez, Frank Evans and Joseph Pass*.

I. Klein—executive member of the Editorial Board of *New Masses* will include among the paintings to be shown at the various galleries this winter, one of the death of a Marion textile striker, recently completed.

Paul Peters—whose plays have attracted attention here and abroad, is working as a farm hand in Wisconsin.

Hugo Gellert—is now engaged on a book of about 100 lithographs and text dramatizing the high spots of *Capital* by Karl Marx, to be published in the coming year.

Jacob Burck—is staff cartoonist of the *Daily Worker*.

Otto Soglow—frequent contributor to the magazines, has illustrated Michael Gold's *Charlie Chaplin's Parade* and other books recently published.

Philip Schatz—24 year old New York journalist made his first appearance in *New Masses* a few months ago.

Adolph Dehn—of Minnesota, recently returned from a year's stay in Germany, will exhibit his work in New York at the Weyhe Galleries.

Melvin Levy—is a frequent contributor of stories and reviews to the magazines and is author of two novels.



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Upton Sinclair Protests

Editor of *New Masses*:

I am sorry to learn that your reviewer, Bennett Stevens, thinks my book on telepathy will not enhance my "reputation" as a radical intellectual leader. If I were accustomed to think about my reputation and its enhancement, I would never have been a radical at all. What I am thinking about is the facts of this mysterious universe and how I can discover them.

Comrade Stevens says that I am not scientific and that the scientists would not be satisfied with my experiments. I do not know what may be Comrade Stevens' authority to speak for the scientists; I can only tell him that I have had letters from many scientists, discussing the book, and none of them has made any definite suggestions as to how the technique of the experiments could be improved. One of the scientists to whom I submitted the manuscript was Albert Einstein, and I hope you will not classify him among the reactionaries, when I tell you that he liked it so well that he volunteered to write a preface for the German edition. Perhaps you will be good enough to quote what he wrote, and let your readers judge between Comrade Stevens and Comrade Einstein:

"I have read the book of Upton Sinclair with great interest, and I am convinced that it deserves the most earnest attention, not only of the laity, but also of the specialists in psychology. The results of the telepathy experiments which are carefully and plainly described in this book stand surely far beyond what an investigator of nature considers to be thinkable; but on the other hand, it is not to be thought of that so conscientious an observer and writer as Upton Sinclair should attempt a deliberate deception of the reading world. His good faith and trustworthiness cannot be doubted, and if it should be that the facts set forth with great clearness do not rest upon telepathy but upon some unknown hypnotic influence from person to person that also would be of high psychological interest. In no case should the psychologically interested pass over this book without heed."

Pasadena, Calif.

UPTON SINCLAIR

Sinclair Deserves Criticism

Editors of *New Masses*:

When I wrote of *Mental Radio*, I had before me the endorsement of Einstein which Upton Sinclair had obligingly supplied as advertising copy. But a statement from Einstein does not make a very poor book a good one. All that Einstein says is that as a natural scientist he is surprised at the facts presented, that he is sure Sinclair is honest and that he thinks that psychologists should be interested. This contradicts nothing said in the review. The reader will note that Einstein reserves judgment on the validity of the hypotheses and does not endorse the book's implications. To do so would have exposed him not only to the criticism but to the ridicule that Upton Sinclair deserves for the inanities he propounds in interpreting his evidence. No one can object to Sinclair's playing drawing games with an insistent wife; but when he becomes garrulous in public about his wife's supposed telepathic powers on the basis of these questionable drawings, he is open to attack. He has evidently learnt nothing from his previous unfortunate "scientific" experience in endorsing quack diets and medical fads. As to the scientific value of these "mental radio" experiments, he admits (pp. 176, 230) that to make them conclusive he should have them performed before a group of competent psychologists. They would know (what he obviously does not know) how to observe the controls and cautions necessary to make the results valid. Upton Sinclair's friends deserve better performances from him and I am certain that they will join with me in my rebuke if they read the book.

BENNETT STEVENS

New York, N. Y.

Greetings to Soviet Workers

Not Without Laughter, first novel by Langston Hughes, parts of which first appeared in *New Masses* a few months ago, has been published recently in this country and is now being issued in several foreign translations.

In Soviet Russia, the book is being published by the State Publishing Company "Land and Factory." On request, the following greetings were sent by the author to Soviet readers, to be included in the first edition:

"All over the world Negroes are robbed, and poor. In the name of their misery I salute the Russian people. I send my greetings to the great Soviet ideal, to its true realization in your own land, and to its sunrise hope for the downtrodden and oppressed everywhere on earth."

With all my heart,
LANGSTON HUGHES

October, 1930.

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